

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY



129 329

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

RUSSIA'S EUROPE

RUSSIA'S EUROPE

by

HAL LEHRMAN



New York and London
D. APPLETON-CENTURY COMPANY, INC.

▼

COPYRIGHT, 1947, BY

HAL LEHRMAN

All rights reserved. This book, or parts thereof, must not be reproduced in any form without permission of the publisher.

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

▼

For

FREDA AND FREDDIE

Acknowledgments

For permission to borrow freely from my articles previously published by them, I am indebted to the following newspapers and magazines: *Commentary*, *Fortune*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *The Fortnightly*, *The Nation*, *The New English Review*, *The New Statesman and Nation*, *The News Chronicle*, *The Newspaper PM*, *This Month*, *This Week*, *Toronto Star Weekly*, *World Review*.

Each of the separate regional parts of this book has been critically read by one or more competent authorities who come from the particular country discussed. In the case of two—Basil Vlavianos for the Greek chapters and Dr. G. M. Dimitrov for the Bulgarian—it is a great pleasure for me to be able to express my gratitude openly here. Their numerous suggestions have been invaluable—although nobody but myself bears responsibility for the opinions herein set down. The identity of other persons who have read the manuscript must remain undisclosed for the sake of their security, as must the names of those friends overseas who have continued to keep me informed of developments in their countries since my departure.

For her tireless vigilance against flaws in grammar, style and logic, my warmest thanks to Ada Siegel.

H. L.

Contents

THRESHOLD TO THE BALKANS

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | Book and Author | 3 |
| 2 | The Lion and the Unhappy Greek Mouse | 9 |

THROUGH THE CURTAIN

- | | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 3 | Belgrade Notebook: Arrival | 57 |
| 4 | Belgrade Notebook: Departure | 88 |
| 5 | Yugoslavia Revisited | 115 |
| 6 | The New Order | 139 |

RED ARMY EUROPE

- | | | |
|----|--|-----|
| 7 | Hungarian Rhapsody, Minor Key | 171 |
| 8 | Rumania: Latin Neighbor | 229 |
| 9 | Bulgaria: Crime and Punishment | 258 |
| 10 | Czechoslovakia: White Sheep | 278 |
| 11 | The Case Against the Russians | 290 |
| 12 | The Case Against Russia | 302 |

JOURNEY HOME

- | | | |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----|
| 13 | Greece Again—and a Doctrine | 317 |
|----|---------------------------------------|-----|

1

Book and Author

This is not the book I meant to write. Between the planning and the writing came a long sea journey and many expeditions by land and air. The traveling was intended to produce notes and impressions to put flesh on the bones of an outline. But it was a voyage of too many discoveries. In the end, I had to drop the unwritten book overboard and do a new one to fit the new facts.

In early 1945, when the project was only a gleam in the eye of author and publisher, the working title was *Reporter in Search of Peace*. Peace did not mean simply armistice, a mere end to the shooting. Everybody somehow knew the war was nearly over, even though one's troopship was blacked out and its destroyer escort scared away a brace of U-boats just off the Virginia coast. My credentials still read "war correspondent," and a flattering uniform came with the title, but "peace correspondent" and an old suit would have fitted the program better, because I was going to watch how the peace was being made—not the paper treaties, but the real peace, the one that had to endure. The core of the book would be a parallel between the end of World War I and the end of World War II. The mistakes of 1919 and of the two decades between the wars were legible signposts indicating the wrong direction. I was to try and see which way the victors were heading this time.

I considered myself a liberal. I had been against appeasement of Hitler, the Munich sell-out of Czechoslovakia, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. I had been for aid to the Allies, lend-lease to Russia, an early Second Front. I detested American Communists as intellectual somersaulters, and admired the Soviet Union as a battering-ram against fascism. I had always felt misgivings about the free society reportedly flourishing inside Russia, and her war against Finland didn't look too good to me either, but democracy in the United States was not quite as sublime as advertised, and our record in Spain, and other places, also left margin for comment. On the whole, I felt the Russians might well be trusted to adjust their own affairs while we

kept busy with repairs at home. Both sides could find their separate ways to advance the cause of individual dignity and the common man.

As for the coming peace, I saw it as a co-operative enterprise in which we and Britain would have to meet the Russians halfway, or even a little better. When I thought of the mistakes of the last peace and the between-war period, I found them largely the fault of the West, with only the USSR on the side of the angels at numerous crucial junctures. I still hold this view about 1919-39, and make no apology for it. True, there were the temporary aberrations of aggression against Finland and of Moscow's pact with the Nazis, but even these had seemed largely to justify themselves by the later Finnish-German Alliance, the delayed Nazi invasion, and the heroic Russian resistance.

In the impending settlement, it was reasonable to expect that Russia, although partially reassured by the speed and heartiness of Allied war aid, might still be a little suspicious of her Western partners. It was therefore up to us to make the first concessions. In the old days, it had been the Russians who championed collective security and behaved as if they believed a "workers' State" could exist in peace side by side with "capitalist States"—and it had been the democracies who behaved as though it were impossible. The burden of proof was now on us.

If I felt any misgivings when I started for overseas on my new assignment, they were about us, not about the Russians. A civil war had just ended in Greece, and the situation there did not reveal Winston Churchill as the dazzling promise of a new deal in Balkan democracy. In Italy, the Americans and the British were propping up the decrepit House of Piedmont, as in France the Americans alone had trafficked earlier with the Pétains and the Darlans. Franco was blooming in Spain under our joint benevolence. Nor could I recall much reason for admiring State Department and Foreign Office policy in Turkey, where I had served a wartime hitch as OWI chief and where with my own ears I had heard us wheedling and flattering a totalitarian regime complete with police terror, one-party dictatorship, racial-supremacy doctrines, and unrelenting hatred for the Russians. No, the outline of my projected book, based on known facts and the legitimate anticipations of a convinced liberal, did not count on finding Allied diplomacy wholly devoted to the interests of freedom for small peoples and an enduring peace for the large ones.

I selected southeastern Europe as my specific zone of investigation. The choice was partly sentimental. In Turkey my public mission had been to persuade the neutral but pro-Nazi Turks—by distribution of American news to the Turkish press and radio—that the United Na-

tions were going to win the war; but my confidential mission had been to smuggle Allied propaganda into the Axis-occupied Balkans and smuggle useful information out. I wanted to go into these countries now and see them for myself. But there was a better reason.

Southeastern Europe was sure to be a prime area of contact between Russia and the West. The British were in Greece. The Russians were in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria. In those Soviet-occupied ex-satellites of Germany, the Americans and British held membership with the Russians in tripartite Control Commissions. In Yugoslavia the Big Three had collaborated to liberate a long-suffering, heroic people and install a democratic left-wing regime in power. From the Adriatic to the Black Sea, from the Maritza River north and west to and beyond the Danube, lay a major testing ground for the capacity of the Powers to get along with little peoples and with one another.

For maximum mobility, I went overseas on a semi-free-lance basis. This kept me clear of deadlines and the compulsions to stay in one specific spot on the map. I could decide my own itinerary, move on from one country to the next when I liked. (The only restriction, at the outset, was the Soviets' ban on entry into their occupation zones, but they had promised to lift this blackout, and eventually they did). And when I found something worth reporting, there was a string of friendly publications I could send my cable to. The most important of these were the New York newspaper, *PM*, a liberal daily; *The Nation*, a liberal American weekly; and *The New Statesman and Nation*, a liberal British weekly. They were all pro-Soviet. I mention the fact here only as indication that such must have been my views also. Otherwise, there would have been no point in my applying to them instead of, say, the Hearst press, and no point in their agreeing to accept copy from me, cabled collect.

The U. S. Coast Guard's very trim troop transport *General W. P. Richardson* let me off at Naples, from where, after solemnly inspecting the ribaldries on the walls of Pompei, I flew to Cairo. It was March, 1945, and in the torrid Egyptian capital the air hung hot with imperial odors. That was the month the Pan-Arab League was born, and I attended its delivery, wondering then, as I wonder now, why the Colonial Office chose to be midwife and wet nurse to that unnecessary infant which so obviously promised to grow into considerable grief for the Empire.

Then I went to Greece, and from Greece, after certain vicissitudes to Yugoslavia. I was in Belgrade when the Soviet taboo against correspondents was exorcised. Here, at last, was my chance to see

how that important other half of the world lived. As fast as I could pack and go, I was on my way into Russian Europe—first stop Budapest....

The contract with my publisher allowed me a year in Europe before I should have to hurry home and pound out a manuscript. At the end of the prescribed year, I was in the middle of Rumania and in the middle of a private crisis. By then I had gone once around Russian Europe. There had been revolutions in each of the countries on my route, but none greater in ratio than the revolution created within me by what I had seen.

The change in my attitude toward the Soviet Union had already brought me to a parting of the ways with several of the newspapers I represented. These liberal publications had revealed a curious illiberalism, shall we say, by printing everything I filed which agreed with their armchair notions and by declining to print anything from me which disagreed with them. In particular, *PM*, which had given excellent display to my critical articles from Greece and other centers of Anglo-American sin, ordered me in Hungary to lay off the heavy political stuff and devote myself instead to amiable human-interest stories. At any rate, I was now the correspondent of the liberal *London News Chronicle* instead of *PM*, and I was writing my political articles for the independent *Fortnightly* instead of the "liberal" *New Statesman*.

But the book was a much graver matter. Inside its more permanent covers, I would be able to speak without further regard for censors, for officials who possess the awful power to give or withhold visas, and for other encumbrances. Whether or not the book attracted any attention, and whatever I said in it, it would commit me to a specific position on the crucial problem of our time—the problem of how to get along with the Soviet Union and how to keep the peace. And even if I abandoned writing the book altogether, I should still have to live with my family, my friends and myself. Contract or no contract, I felt I could not just wrap up my notes and go home. This affair was too big to take the smallest avoidable risk of being wrong. I needed to check and recheck. I had to be sure, absolutely sure, that I knew what I was talking about.

So I doubled back on my tracks, and made my tour all over again. I even added to the itinerary. I returned to Greece for a second look at our side of the fence. I went around Russian Europe once more, this time including Czechoslovakia. I also visited the American zones in Austria and Germany, to compare Allied and Soviet tech-

niques of occupation. When I finished all this, I was sure I knew what I had to talk about.

It is a notorious truth that starry-eyed liberals who visit the Soviet Union expecting to find Utopia tend to go way over to the other extreme and become lamentable Red-baiters after their excursion. I did not visit the Soviet Union, and I certainly did not look for Utopia in the areas under Soviet influence or occupation. I did look, however, for a minimum amount of decency and good faith.

Since returning home, I have naturally discussed my trip with various old friends. These are the kind of people whose pro-Soviet views I shared before I went away and who still hold those views. I have not convinced any of them, so far as I know. I didn't hope to. Why should they throw away their considered opinions because of anything I tell them? After all, I refused to do so myself until I had gone over the ground again. One doesn't walk away from a lifetime of convictions simply because somebody turns up with a bit of contrary evidence—even if the somebody is a person you know well and believe to be a reasonably honest fellow whose previous reports have been a fair facsimile of the truth.

But a few of my friends are worried now, along with some of the people in audiences to which I have lectured, and a few of the latter even admit that they have been convinced. That is all I can expect to do with this book: to disturb some of the liberals into re-examining their position, and to persuade a few readers here and there who are on the borderline, people who have a sturdy suspicion that neither the professional coiners of anti-Soviet slogans nor the chronic worshippers of the Kremlin are to be entirely believed. That is why, as the reader will see, I spend more time in the following pages talking about *my* opinions and about *my* reactions to what I saw than modesty customarily permits. I do this not out of any inflated belief that what I think about anything is so all-fired important. I do it simply to show the impact of Soviet policy and action on the average mind of an average liberal. Let this be, if you like, a case history of what the reader himself might possibly have thought and felt if he had made the same voyage.

The largest single section of the book is devoted to Yugoslavia, for two reasons. This was the first country under Soviet influence to which I came—and it was the most advanced example of a Communist regime in power. Tito and his Partisans had already achieved under their own steam what their comrades in the Soviet-occupied territories were accomplishing with the help of the Red Army.

Yugoslavia is therefore worth particular study as a model of what we may hope for generally when the grand plan is fulfilled. However, enough has been put down here about the others to present a tolerably detailed picture of Russian Europe today, and to suggest what it promises for us.

I have also tried to recall enough of the pre-Soviet history of these countries to provide some standard for assessing the benefits or damages of Communist rule. Uneasy liberal friends of the Soviets rightly argue that Southeastern Europe never did have any democracy. But they go on from this to ask why the absence of democracy there now should be viewed with so much alarm. There are several answers to this, but the best, I think, is that there are degrees of tyranny, as inspection of the record will show, and that the earlier existence of injustice is not a good alibi for its present continuation, to say nothing of its increase.

Finally, I hope this report may serve as an informal source book to an obscure but formative period in the current history of an increasingly important part of Europe. Newspapermen arrived there late, and most of them stayed only briefly. The pressure of bigger news elsewhere from more impressive date lines compelled editors generally to limit their correspondents to "spot coverage" assignments and short surveys. Rarely was a reporter able to settle down for a while and take a good long look. Nobody, to my knowledge, made it his business to plod about from country to country in the Russian sphere, marking the facts down and confirming them.

The reader will find no sensational interviews with famous men, nor many conversations with the present rulers of Southeastern Europe. One of the characteristics of the New Order, in fact, is the distaste of its leaders for the press, and their fear of saying anything at all before clearing it through the highest authority. I have spent much more time with the little people, what they had to tell me, and how they felt—all of which took me much closer to the truth. Nor are there any stirring accounts of war and battle here. Though I went in uniform, I came after the bugles stopped blowing. All I can report is a political war, the creeping conquest of many peoples by an army carrying placards and posters instead of flags. All I can report is the silent battle of half a continent, in resistance to a future not of its own choosing.

2

The Lion and the Unhappy Greek Mouse

Greece, in the Spring of 1945, was on the verge of total collapse. Greece, it may be added without trying to be funny, is a veteran of verges of total collapse. After my first visit, I stayed away for a year, but when I returned in the Spring of 1946 to watch elections against which a substantial part of the Greek people had declared a boycott, Greece was again on the verge of total collapse. And now, as I write this in the middle of 1947, Greece is still tottering on the same old brink. The British have given up saving her, and the United States is pouring in dollars, equipment and technicians to pull her back onto solid ground.

For the protection of reader and author, it is necessary to say at once that modern Greek politics are somewhat confusing. The antique Hellenic tradition of the pure marble, the straight column, the simple phrase was lost somewhere between Pericles and King Paul, along with the classic Grecian nose. Socrates would have made peace with his shrewish wife and shunned the market place if he had lived in the Athens I found when I flew in from Cairo three months after the 1944-45 Civil War.

There were some thirty political parties in the country, and twenty-six political newspapers in the capital alone. I arrived in time for another cabinet crisis, from which emerged Greece's third new government in six months, making a total of sixty-one cabinet ministers since the German evacuation and the fall of the last quisling regime. The cafés on Constitution Square, where shots fired by police had precipitated thirty-three days of street battle, were thronged with ex-premiers and ex-cabinet ministers, each eager to tell you a different story of why Greece was confronting final disaster.

The only British who seemed satisfied that what they were doing was right were the tin-helmeted, white-belted sentries staring rigidly ahead as they stood perpetual guard before British Army Head-

quarters on University Street. Their superiors, military and diplomatic, all the way up to Prime Minister Winston Churchill, were quietly going mad trying to "stabilize" Greece without scandalizing British voters or surrendering Greece to the Russians. The American State Department was issuing periodic blasts of criticism but no constructive advice or material assistance. The Soviet Embassy was giving frequent receptions weighted with caviar and lubricated with vodka, and watching the worsening situation with tight-lipped inscrutability.

Only the naïve or the hopelessly partisan see any political conflict as all black or all white. The Greek situation was a confused spectrum in varying intensities of gray. The Greeks squared off among themselves as Left, Center and Right—radical and moderate republicans, moderate and reactionary royalists. Not every leftist was a democrat, every rightist a villain, or every centrist a philosopher.

But each observer needs a yardstick if he hopes to measure any situation. The one I brought to Greece in 1945 was a United Nations-Yalta yardstick. It was notched off with the Four Freedoms. It came from a factory where people believed that Britain, the United States and the Soviet Union had to co-operate, not compete, if peace was to be assured. It presupposed that Russia was willing to co-operate with us and that Greece was an ideal place for us to start co-operating with Russia.

One could penetrate to the hard core of the problem and come up with reasonably clear conclusions. Pursuing this method, it was not long before I became known in the British Embassy as "that troublesome fellow." My dispatches to New York were cabled back for reprint in the Greek leftist press. Some even found their way into *Izvestia*, and one story was honored by a rebroadcast in Greek over Radio Moscow—a compliment which dropped me into a pot of hot water with the British Army, an incident of which I shall say more later. For it was evident, despite my careful qualifications and moderate language (which the Greek and Soviet editors just as carefully lost in translation), that I earnestly regarded British policy in Greece as an abomination in the nostrils of freedom.

MANHUNT

EAM (*Ethnikō Apeleftherotikō Metopo* or "National Liberation Front") was the coalition of Greek leftist parties which had fought the war against the Germans and the civil war against the British, and was now fighting for its life against the royalists.

The crux of the then current Greek crisis was the failure of a pact called the Varkiza Agreement.

The civil war, during which British tanks and warships fired into the Athens workers' districts where leftists were entrenched, had come formally to a close on February 12, 1945, with the signing of this pact.

There is evidence that all sides shared blame for the conflict and had acted stupidly or in bad faith: that EAM hastened the show-down by its irresponsible belligerence; that the Greek Government and the British failed to give satisfying assurances against a fascist coup which EAM feared; and that the authorities had accepted the quisling Security Battalion troops as allies against Greeks who had battled the Germans for three years. Whatever the blame, the important point is that the Varkiza Agreement—personally arranged by Churchill, guaranteed by Britain and ratified by a new Greek Government which Churchill had selected—was supposed to call quits.

Under its terms, illegal semimilitary groups were to be disarmed, a nonpartisan police and army created, collaborationists purged, civil and political liberties protected. All this was to be in preparation for an honest plebiscite which would decide whether the Greek people wanted a republic or the return of George II from his London exile.

But neither the Government which fell shortly after my arrival nor the Government which succeeded it seemed to know that its sole function, apart from reviving Greece's paralyzed economy, was to make the Varkiza Agreement stick. The pact was already a dead letter. Open season had been declared by the Right on the parties and newspapers of the Left, and on the common citizens for whom they functioned. An unofficial nationwide witch-hunt against "Communists" was in full cry.

It wasn't so bad in Athens, where the Government possessed some authority, the British were very visible, and the presence of foreign observers put both on their good behavior. One wing of the Archaeology Museum on Patission Street was now a prison for EAMites, but it was not a large wing. I was permitted to visit my friend Stasis Someritis, a leader of the Socialist ELD party, arrested for owning an antique Italian pistol. Police had found the pistol, which was too rusty to fire, after Mme. Someritis called them to save her husband from rightists who had broken into their home, threatening to blow his head off. The rightists carried new tommyguns, but the police only arrested Someritis. Anyway, he was being well treated. His wife brought him fresh linen and home-cooked food every day—and after about a week he was released.

On the whole, life in Athens was fairly quiet, and one could go several weeks without hearing of a political beating or a murder, unless one read the leftist papers, which tended to exaggerate a little.

In the provinces you could see the royalists more clearly at work, because a village is smaller than a capital, and fewer things escape notice.

Geographically, the Terror was spotty. In some places, there was complete calm; in others the National Guard, which had been sent out to restore order after the civil war, did so by arresting everybody connected with the Left and his relatives; in still other places the National Guard sat on its hands while illegal rightist bands performed the work of "tranquilization." This process sometimes included the sacking or burning of leftist meeting places and the torturing and killing of unbelievers.

One never knew where the next blow would strike or why. Usually, members of EAM were preferred game, but middle-of-the-road republicans were also occasionally beaten up, and sometimes just plain people who had neglected to adorn their homes with the King's portrait. In a few places I visited, half or more of the able-bodied males had fled to the hills, as they had done in the days of the Germans.

Once there had been a leftist resistance leader named Kriton. During the Occupation, Kriton specialized in blowing up enemy troop trains. His regiment even penetrated into Bulgaria and cut communications between Sofia and Istanbul for several weeks. He captured seven hundred Germans and two trainloads of Nazi food and ammunition. His main area of operation was Evros, and Evros was the first province of Greece to be liberated. But when I arrived in Evros, the National Guard told me it was combing the mountains of Evros for a desperado named Kriton....

According to the Varkiza Agreement, the National Guard was neutral in politics, as were the civil authorities. However, this neutrality was not apparent from an inspection of barracks or provincial government buildings adorned with the legend *Zito O Vasileus* (Hurrah for the King!). In Komotini I saw pictures of George II and Churchill nailed to the pillars of the Guard headquarters. I started photographing the scene when an officer rushed up. It looked as if he meant to assault my camera. But all he desired was for me to wait a minute while he put up a picture of Roosevelt. I passed through Komotini again a few days later. The Roosevelt picture was gone.

In the Larissa jail, I found a girl serving three months for shouting "Down with the King!" Two young men who yelled "Long Live Varkiza and Democracy!" got ten months.

There was an instructive jail at Alexandroupolis, in remote Thrace. It had six cells, each about twenty-five feet square and containing fifty men. The prisoners slept on the floor. Their extra clothes, and their wives' food-baskets (only destitute prisoners were fed at public expense) hung on nails in the walls.

I went into all the cells and asked the three hundred men why they had been arrested. Only three knew.

One of them was the former EAM mayor of Alexandroupolis. He was accused of having ordered numerous executions during his regime and of having "usurped the State's authority." The second was a Communist once on the governing council of a near-by village. He had been imprisoned by the Bulgars in each of Bulgaria's three modern wars against Greece; in the last war he had been condemned to death by the Bulgarians; the charge against him now was that he was pro-Bulgarian. The third was a doctor from Samothrace, a liberal. His crime was that he had obeyed orders during the Occupation to vaccinate the islanders and the Bulgarian garrison against a smallpox epidemic.

The warden stood on one foot and then on the other. He said *he* didn't know why all these people were in jail, either. Why were the hearings and trials being delayed? We don't have the authority, admitted the warden, by now very depressed. We are waiting for a magistrate from Athens....

Inefficient and isolated because of wartime damage to communications, the government was—worst of all—appallingly indifferent to the persecution of the Left. Though it talked piously of the need for law and order, it made small effort to restrain violators of the Varkiza truce. The bureaucracy was filled with people who considered leftists to be proper subjects for suppression.

As if to guarantee the continuation of lawlessness, a new *gendarmérie*—the permanent National Guard—was being recruited heavily from the rightists. Eighteen of its twenty-six brigade colonels were unabashed royalists, and half of the rest preferred the King but didn't admit it. Conscripts were systematically screened for evidences of affiliation with the wartime leftist Resistance. Only 20 per cent of these were accepted; the others were dismissed for all kinds of ingenious reasons, mainly "physical." Officer candidates suspected of leftism

were rejected out of hand, without even the pretense of a medical disqualification.

As a result, new Guard units going out to replace the old were hardly superior as impartial custodians of the peace. They merely tended to be younger, and better shots. General Bitsanis, Greek military governor in Macedonia, inspected one of these fledgling battalions soon after it arrived in the North. He confided to me that when he asked the men if they had any complaints, one spoke up and grumbled that they "ought to be allowed to kill more Communists." Another unit, the General went on dreamily, "disbanded a leftist crowd very effectively at Negrita by firing into the air—I don't understand how several civilians happened to get wounded."

An important stipulation of Varkiza was the provision for the surrender of all weapons by the numerous irregular para-military societies, so that the country might be pacified for the plebiscite. There were armed leftist groups and armed rightist groups. Some of the latter had fought against the Germans, and some had fought with them; but none of them hurried to give up their weapons. On the other hand, ELAS (the military branch of EAM) began by disarming some units, as proof of leftist good faith. But when the ELAS commanders saw that their royalist opponents were holding back, they promptly buried whatever good armaments remained, and thereafter yielded nothing except flintlocks from the wars against the Turks. At this point the Government summoned the National Guard to enforce the Varkiza Agreement. Day after day the royalist press quivered with indignant announcements of new caches of leftist grenades, mortars and light artillery uncovered by the Guard. Significantly, no equivalent discoveries of rightist weapons were made. This was not because the rightists lacked weapons, because I and other correspondents saw royalists openly parading with them.

ATROCITY STORY

Officials shrugged their shoulders if you expressed civilized alarm about the curious ways of the Greek police. At the time of the Occupation, after Liberation, and during the civil war, you would be told, the Left had run amuck. "EAM made thousands of victims," one Minister said, "and each had many relatives." "How could you ask a National Guardsman," another asked, "to serve in the same battalion with the man who killed his brother?"

The excesses of the Left were a godsend to royalist propaganda. Royalist leader Constantine Tsaldaris (later to become Prime Minister) was demanding a quick plebiscite on the king-vs.-republic question

because he believed people would vote for the King as long as the memory of the atrocities remained green. He paced back and forth among the many busts of Napoleon in his study and thundered at me: "Nobody has yet been punished for the massacre of innocent Greeks by the Bolsheviks. The people want revenge. It is hopeless to try to control them. They are not yet ready to forgive. As for me, Varkiza or no Varkiza, don't expect me to collaborate with Bolshevik assassins!"

What justification was there for condemning the Left as a community of cutthroats?

During the war, Greeks of all political persuasions had suffered a brutalization of their instincts. Previously, they had piled revolution on revolution with rarely a shot fired in anger and never any mass killings. But the savageries of Axis occupation, notably the refined inventions of the Gestapo and the Bulgarians, had made human life a very cheap thing. Everybody knew that the rival *Andartes* (guerrillas) in the Greek underground indulged in mutual butchery. Pro-fascist militia and peasant battalions armed by the Axis stalked the Left with particular ferocity. On the other hand, the Left maintained special squads trained in the art of assassination. Not always were their targets collaborationists or Axis authorities.

But it would have been rash to try to estimate which side had killed more of the other, the Left or the Right. No satisfactory technique having been devised to interview a corpse or determine from a man's skeleton why he had been killed and by whom, I declined invitations by leftists and rightists to inspect mass graves allegedly stuffed with the bones of the other faction's victims.

Admittedly, there had also been a certain amount of roughhouse by the Left in the immediate wake of the German evacuation. Numerous persons during this period suffered sudden liquidation. Were these the innocent victims of a bloodthirsty mob, as the Right charged, or were they collaborationists whom mass vengeance had overtaken in the first frenzy of liberation? Popular purges of quislings, without benefit of the slow-moving courts, had been a phenomenon not confined to Greece. Should the Greek resistance be singled out for special condemnation?

But one thing was indisputably true: the Left had permitted a widespread wave of wanton murders to break *in the last days of the civil war*, long after the German departure. Therein lay an unforgivable tactical error—all morality apart.

It was not necessary to inspect bones to confirm these atrocity

stories. EAM had taken thousands of hostages to insure good treatment of leftists held by the British. There were too many reputable witnesses that these hostages had been seized indiscriminately (not, as EAM pretended, because they had collaborated with the Germans) and that many of them had been murdered without reason. I took the trouble to verify the story about a milkman who had distributed milk gratis to EAM militiamen during the fighting and had unhappily hitched a ride on one of their trucks when the fighting ended; he meant to get off near his home but the truck, loaded with thirty hostages, drove on to a camp out of town, where the hostages—and the milkman—were summarily shot through the head. Others were forced to strip, take off their shoes, stagger twenty miles a day by forced march through the snow into the hills; thousands of bodies were found in later weeks. A man and his two sons were cut to pieces solely because their family name was Metaxas, the only connection they had with the late dictator.

Responsible EAM leaders admitted to me that horrible excesses had indeed occurred. They gave various reasons. They said the evacuating Germans deliberately emptied the jails, and some of the released criminals attached themselves to the leftist militia in the confusion, thirsty for loot and a chance to kill. They reminded me of the moral decline caused by the war: "Nowadays Greeks are as accustomed to tommyguns and human targets as Americans are to shotguns and birds." Some allowance was to be made for the fact that women and children had died in the bombardments of the workers' districts, provoking an uncontrollable lust for revenge. And finally it had to be remembered that at least some of the victims had been Axis collaborators.

But, whatever the glossing-over, the plain fact was that thousands had been slaughtered by leftists over whom their leaders had momentarily lost control—an event which the royalists would never let their enemies live down.

There was another charge against EAM, or rather against EAM's Communist nucleus, which was potentially graver than the atrocity stories. The murders could be largely explained away as a temporary frenzy; but the specific accusation against the Communists, if true, could undermine EAM's right to power in any future democratic Greece.

I had heard this charge before, but it was brought up most forcefully when I went up to Salonika shortly before leaving Greece. A friend led me to a modest bourgeois flat halfway up the hill to the old

Byzantine fortifications dominating Salonika. Inside he had collected eleven men, the district leaders of a half dozen center and moderate left parties, to brief me on their position.

They represented small tradesmen, craftsmen, peasants and intellectuals. They were all bitterly anti-king. Monarchy, they said, had given Greece nothing except trouble and the Metaxas dictatorship. The Greek masses were innately republican. Yet, in an immediate plebiscite, they would vote overwhelmingly for George's return, as their only protection against Communist tyranny.

But, I protested, there was more to EAM than the Communists. What about the other parties in the EAM coalition?

And this was what the Salonika moderates told me of their experience with the Communists in northern Greece:

At the beginning, EAM was really a union of democratic anti-fascist groups. Most of its component parts had previously opposed the Communists. If the democratic groups became willing to join forces with the Communists, it was because the latter seemed sincere in their renunciation of all narrow party interests. The Communists swore that their only purpose was defense of the Greek fatherland. It was they who organized EAM. All the men present in the room had joined, believing the Communist slogans.

But before long they discovered that EAM was being used as a front for extension of Communist control and prestige. Ordinary Greek patriots did the fighting and dying, but the Communists claimed the credit. Their long years of prewar underground organization gave them the advantage over the others in party discipline. They maneuvered into all key positions. They torpedoed their non-Communist comrades, even betraying them to enemy authorities and the quisling police. At least six top leaders of various democratic groups in EAM were executed, but not one Communist chief was executed. Who had betrayed them? And in the last year of the Occupation, action against the Germans dwindled to insignificance. The Party was saving its reserves for what it considered more important than the war on fascism—the establishment of a Red dictatorship.

After Liberation, the Communists came out into the open. Through ELAS, the military branch of the leftist resistance, EAM dominated northern Greece. But the Communist system of political commissars in the Army dominated ELAS. The other parties in EAM were barred from making speeches or holding meetings in the liberated villages. Only the Communists and a few stooge groups received positions in the provisional administration which existed until Varkiza. On the pretense of arresting collaborators, they packed the jails with thou-

sands of innocent people who weren't collaborators at all, but were simply anti-Communists.

That was why, my informants said, the King would win now, and why anybody ever connected with EAM was liable to be killed in his bed by the rightists. By calling themselves "democrats" the Communists gave the royalists a good excuse to suspect and persecute genuine democrats. To make the word "democracy" respectable again, Greece needed a long period of quiet, during which the truly democratic forces could rally. The Germans had spared the extreme Right and the extreme Left, massacring the Center. But enough moderates had survived to give Greece a fresh start in the democratic way, if only law and order were restored. After that, a plebiscite would show that the Greek people wanted no more kings. . . .

CASE FOR THE DEFENSE

The stories about the Communist threat to Greek democracy were profoundly troubling, but they failed to convince me. To begin with, they were hearsay evidence. Not until leaving Greece did I enter territory where I could see a Communist regime actually in power and could learn to appreciate, at first hand, the meaning of such a regime for freedom. In the Greek context, it was impossible to be more concerned about the Communists, who were being badgered at every turn, than about the royalists, who were openly driving to convert Greece into a postwar bastion of reaction. Moreover, favorable stories were as current about EAM as bad ones.

My talks with top anti-EAM bosses hardly served to prejudice me in their favor. Stylianos Gonatas, No. 2 man for the royalists, was an example. He assured me that Greece needed a king in order to unite the nation and strengthen its claims for Albanian and Bulgarian territory. His country lay prostrate after three years of war, but all Gonatas could think of as a cure was a program which could hardly be achieved without another war. After that, I couldn't see much reason for believing anything he had to say about EAM.

George Papandreou received me in an apartment stifling with dozens of bouquets of roses. Papandreou had been head of the Government which fought the civil war against EAM. For two hours he labored to prove to me that EAM had been responsible for that conflict. He insisted again and again that he, Papandreou, had always been, and still was, a confirmed republican. The very day after I saw him, the press published an intercepted confidential letter from Papandreou to the King, in which the "confirmed republican" fervently assured the monarch of his esteem.

Napoleon Zervas, in a ninety-minute conversation, imbued me only with his conviction that his Christian name was more than a mother's whim. Zervas was chief of the right-wing EDES resistance movement which had fought poorly against the Germans and was finally driven by the leftist militia into the sea—but this could not be guessed from his own account of his exploits. Like Royalist chief Tsaldaris, Zervas' only program was return of the King and annihilation of the Left.

Sophoulis, Tsouderos and various other moderate republican ex-premiers whom I met were more palatable because of their anti-monarchism. But their condemnation of the Left was unpersuasive. They seemed to me to be old men, restricted by old formulae, unqualified to solve the totally new problems of a tormented and shattered Greece.

The leaders on the other side, Communists like Zachariades and Siantos, and Socialists like Tsirimokos and Svolos, were much more impressive. Especially Elias Tsirimokos, twenty years younger than the tired moderates and conservatives, a man of vigor and valiant liberalism rooted in concepts of the French and American revolutions. Tsirimokos had quit EAM after the civil war, denouncing its Communist faction as greedy for absolute power—but thanks to the Government's reactionary policy he was now again co-operating in a united front with the Communists. Another of his sort was General Euripides Bakirdzis, who had commanded the leftist army in Macedonia. While the civil war raged in the South, Bakirdzis kept the peace in the North—although he outnumbered the British forces in his area by five divisions to one and could have massacred them.*

There were many districts in the North where plain peasants gave glowing reports of the leftist troops. I was told they had fought in rags, sometimes without shoes. They went months without a drachma of pay. They ate only what the people voluntarily gave them. Often their only meal was a paste of maize and water. After Liberation, one of the first acts of the provisional EAM administration in the North was to levy a tax on the wealthy in order to open soup kitchens for the civilian poor.

At the French Legation in Athens, eighteen Alsatians dressed in German uniforms were waiting to be shipped home. The Germans

* After Varkiza, the British Army thanked Bakirdzis and promised it would never forget him for having resisted Communist pressure to start shooting. When I first met him in April, 1945, the General had already been retired by the regime. When I saw him again in March, 1946, he was still barred from active service. Some months later the new royalist government exiled him to the Aegean island of Ikaria. In May, 1947, his "suicide" was officially announced.

had conscripted them after the fall of France. They had spent a year as occupation troops in Greece, and deserted when the *Wehrmacht* evacuated the country. They had been on the "receiving end" of the Greek resistance. Their testimony therefore seemed more authoritative than that of Greek witnesses.

The Alsatians agreed that the leftist ELAS militia had done all the fighting against them. They had never even seen any other resistance group.

As the Alsatians in their off-duty time had begun to mingle with the people in Salonika—their first garrison in Greece—the townsmen discovered that these soft-spoken friendly soldiers were not *Germani* after all. Ultimately they found themselves "at home" in many shuttered houses throughout the brooding city.

From their Greek friends the Alsatians learned that the ELAS bands in the Macedonian hills were not Bolshevik gangsters, as the German propaganda vainly tried to convince the populace. Every time ELAS looted an arms depot or blew up a bridge the Saloniki privately rejoiced. The occasions for such celebration were frequent.

When the final retreat began, and the Alsatians deserted, they were taken almost immediately by a band of ELAS raiders and held prisoner until after the civil war. They did not enjoy their stay. "Life among the partisans was bad," they told me. "The food was terrible, and there was very little of it. But it was the same food the guerrillas ate. They wore scraps of uniform, Italian breeches, British battle-jackets, German helmets, anything they could find. Things were especially hard in the civil war. The fighting was mostly in the snow. But they never complained. They were always singing their battle song. It was called 'Forward Combatants.' Even the wounded sang it."

PHILOSOPHERS' CORNER

There were certain wise and worldly men in Athens, most of them foreigners living in Greece since long before the war, who refused to get excited about the current verge of collapse. I suppose they had seen so many crises they were immune. They regarded the Greeks as a lovable people addicted to violent games. They had given up taking sides for one Greek faction or another or feeling indignant over outrages.

Every Greek regime pushes Greeks around, they said. Anything else would be abnormal. In the past thirty years the country had survived six wars and ten revolutions. If the obvious campaign to force George II down the people's throats bothered me, I should take heart from the certainty that he or his House would be thrown out eventually, as it

had been thrown out twice before. Greeks are like that. Consider their behavior toward Eleutherios Venizelos, their greatest modern statesman. Four times he shook the dust of Athens from his feet. He was even burned in effigy by the Athenians. But each time he returned, the same Athenians wept for joy at the sight of their old white-whiskered deliverer. As for Venizelos himself, he had resisted the monarchy all his life, but shortly before he died he recommended the return of the King!

This was all profoundly true. It was an agreeable and comforting attitude, which might have enabled me to enjoy the pleasures of Athens much more than I did. But it had one serious flaw: that while the philosophers sipped their *ouzo*, the heads of innocent people, and of people who had rendered us great services in the war, were being broken.

And being broken by persons who had worked very hard at doing us in during that same war.

In Athens the most rabid haters of EAM, and the heartiest friends of the British, were the gentry who occupied the slopes of Lykabettos, that majestic peak which faces the hill of the Acropolis. These gentry, about twenty thousand of them, known to ordinary Greeks as the "Kolonaki," dwelt in elegant villas and apartments while more than a million of their fellow Athenians lived in slums. I never saw Kolonaki who looked as if they had missed a meal during the German Occupation, when thousands of Greeks died of hunger. I never heard of Kolonaki executed by the Germans or killed in guerrilla battle against them.

The valet on my floor in the Hotel Grande Bretagne, a wizened, stunted little fellow named Marko, set me straight one evening with a little speech in French which translates into pretty good English prose, I think. He said: "The rich don't like to give the poor people money and work. Instead, they like to hire gangsters to beat the poor people. They call the poor people Communists. The orphans who go out begging because their fathers were killed fighting for Greece in Albania are also Communists, they say. They say we are against religion, church and family. The truth is that the rich don't even know where the churches are. It was we who fought for the churches and the family at the front, while they dined with the generals in Athens. Later they dined with the Germans and Italians. . . . They say we are Communists. If a father cannot feed his children, what does he have to lose? There are very few Communists in Greece, but there are many fathers with hungry children. . . ."

Casual perusal of any morning's news in Athens was likely to make you sit up, with your eyes popping at items like the following:

Nikolaos Kyriakidis was arrested yesterday and charged with escaping from jail. Kyriakidis had been sentenced to 16 years' imprisonment by a German court-martial for political action. He escaped at the time of the Liberation.

There was the enlightening trial of Gendarmerie Lieutenant Venetsanopoulos, whom the Germans had sent to Thessaly in 1943 to fight the guerrillas. The lieutenant and some of his men joined the guerrillas instead. BBC Greek-language broadcasts of that period rejoiced, and urged other officers to follow his example. Nevertheless he was arrested five months after Liberation and tried for desertion. The fact that, in this case, the "deserter" was acquitted did not diminish the enormity of the fact that such a trial could have taken place.

The explanation for these antics was as obvious as it was fantastic. A large part of the police personnel had been carried over in bulk from the Occupation. They changed their habits reluctantly. When the Germans were in Greece, the police hunted down leftists as enemies of the Germans. Now that monarchism was fashionable, they hunted down the same leftists as enemies of the King. It was as simple as that.

A purge committee had indeed been set up to clean out the collaborationists among the police. This committee, headed by Assistant Police Chief A. Sambanis, had accomplished precisely nothing. The explanation for this lack of enthusiasm was simple. During the Occupation the following order had gone out to all ranks: "The impression has been created that the police are not sufficiently active in pursuit of the EAM-ELAS anarchists. This impression must not endure. . . ." The order was signed by Assistant Police Chief A. Sambanis.

The same aversion to discharging old friends gripped all branches of the administration. This included numerous provincial governors, under-secretaries of state, department heads, university professors, even bishops—who had diligently served their Italo-German masters in the years of Axis dominion. But the odor of collaboration hung highest of all in the Army.

It had been agreed at Varkiza that the Army, which would of course be heroically neutral in the coming plebiscite between monarchy and republic, was to be reorganized to purge it of traitors, cowards and other undesirables. Military boards were accordingly set up to select the

new cadres of officers from the prewar army lists. Each officer applying for reinstatement was to have his record scrupulously inspected.

It was therefore a matter of piquant interest that the ranking members of these boards were, without exception, avowed royalists each of whom had distinguished himself during the war against the Axis by collaboration with the enemy, or defeatism, or nonco-operation with the resistance movement.

These patriots devised a foolproof system for keeping the Army politically pure—like the National Guard. The system consisted of two categories, “A” and “B”, into which all candidates were parceled.

Category “A” meant “active service.” Under this heading went ex-officers of the quisling Security Battalions, members of royalist terrorist societies like the “X” gang (whose name came from two crossed *gammas*, the initial of King George and his Glucksburg dynasty), and members of secret military clubs formed in the Army after George left Greece ahead of the Germans.

Category “B”, with classic Hellenic simplicity, meant “not in service.” Into this group—and out of the Army—went those suspected of republican sentiments and especially all officers who had joined ELAS to fight the invaders. Not one known ELAS officer was found “worthy” of reinstatement to his rank in the Army.

ALICE IN QUISLING-LAND

Obviously, if collaborationists remained in the Army and the Government, one could hardly expect traitors to be executed. Every other liberated country in Europe (and most ex-Nazi satellites too) dispatched quislings with speed and varying degrees of ruthlessness. Greece alone showed clemency—but the quality of the mercy was so exaggerated that it amounted to a doublecross of the Greek people.

During the three successive quisling regimes, 50,000 Greeks had been executed, a million more died of hunger, nearly ten million gold sovereigns were embezzled, and the country was systematically pillaged. A squaring of accounts with the quislings, therefore, seemed a high-priority “must” for free Greece, if not a sacred duty.

It was therefore quite proper for Premier George Papandreou, four days after Liberation, to announce in Athens that his Government would punish “rigorously all those who have stained Greek honor by collaborating in any way whatsoever with the invaders.” This touched off an epidemic of processions through the capital by women in black, workers, students, children, all waving clenched fists and chanting, “Death to the traitors.” Every day, people clutched at passers-by on the street and demanded their arrest as collaborationists. Fresh blood

flowed without benefit of jury. One colonel, denounced as a murderer, enlarged his dossier by shooting down his accuser in the middle of crowded University Street, after which he raced into the War Ministry, where a cordon of troops fought off a lynch mob until he could be locked up.

Meanwhile the authorities scratched about for a basis on which to prosecute collaborationists. Nothing in the Constitution or the corpus of Greek law could meet the emergency. The quislings were traitors—but their governments had been formed legally, a paradox which the solons had not anticipated. Finally it was decided to go ahead anyway. The more flagrant quislings were ticked off. At the top of the dishonor roll were the three Occupation Premiers: John Rallis, scion of a great political family and a renowned consumer of *ouzo*, the absinthe of the Eastern Mediterranean; General George Tsolakoglu, who signed the surrender to the Germans; and Constantine Logothetopoulos, who had escaped to Germany and would be tried *in absentia*.

The ex-premiers, with one hundred and forty-four others, were deposited in the Averof prison. The jail officials having all been appointed by Rallis, the incarceration was somewhat sumptuous. The prisoners were permitted to telephone, receive visitors at all hours, and give banquets.

Then came the December revolt and the battle of Athens. ELASites besieged the Averof prison. The quislings borrowed arms from their warders and blazed away until relieved by British tank troops. Ex-War Minister George Bakos and ex-Supply Minister George Pirounakis were captured by the rebels, and Rallis disappeared. (Bakos had been a co-signer of the surrender to the Germans. Pirounakis was a onetime policeman who had saved the wife of Sir Edward Law, a British finance expert, from death in a motor accident before the war. When Sir Edward died, his widow married Pirounakis, though she was as old as his mother, and his career was bright thereafter.) Tried by a People's Court, Bakos and Pirounakis were executed. Bakos' corpse, later recovered by Government troops, was given a state funeral attended by high Army officers bearing wreaths.

Rallis had a beard, grown since the German evacuation, to disguise himself. He screwed a monocle into his eye, ambled past Government headquarters at the Grande Bretagne Hotel in central Athens, and settled down in a friend's apartment in the swank Kolonaki district. His escape caused nearly as much excitement for several days as the civil war. Eventually Rallis began worrying—not about the police finding him, but about the complicated manner he might die if ELAS found him. So he telephoned British Intelligence. At two o'clock one

afternoon, by appointment, he surrendered to two British officers, a batch of war correspondents, and a squad of M.P.'s. The M.P.'s respectfully presented arms before taking him away.

When the Varkiza Agreement ended the fighting, the new Government tried to stall the trials. But across the frontier, meanwhile, the Bulgarian ex-Regents, including the late King Boris' brother, a several hundred others had been expeditiously tried and executed. Balkan vanity asserted itself. The Greeks declined to be outdone by their Slav neighbors. The necessary decrees and a bushel of indictments were issued. Trial of twenty-seven first-rank prisoners was fixed for February 21st.

When court opened in the old Arsakeion School for Girls, barbed wire ringed the building, police roped off the adjacent streets, a lawyers, witnesses and correspondents were searched before entering. These precautions were particularly exotic because twelve of the accused were meanwhile strolling about at complete liberty. The Justice Ministry, ruling they had acted as civil servants during the Occupation rather than political officeholders, abstained from locking them up.

The beginning of the trial introduced a five-day period of intermittent riot. At one point all the defense attorneys rose in wrath and marched out. Just as they reached the door, the presiding magistrate saved the day by adjourning the session. At another point, the sixty prisoners staged a mass protest against being kept in jail while the small fry co-defendants went comfortably home each night. Ralston screamed: "I won't leave this room alive. Give me my freedom or I shall stay here forever." There were cheers from his colleagues, lawyers and relatives.

The Justice Ministry finally promised that nobody condemned to death would be executed until the Legislature established the validity of the Court. No Legislature was possible until the plebiscite and elections, still a long way off. The defendants, being all royalists and confident of the merciful King's return, subsided. The trial settled down into a continuous drone during several weeks of testimony by State witnesses.

Interest revived energetically when the defense's case opened. Ali never knew a more fabulous Wonderland than the wartime Greece which began to unfold in that dingy, unpublicized courtroom.

It was at once established that the surrender to the Germans was considered a praiseworthy act by many pillars of the regime not sitting in judgment on those who had surrendered.

Admitting he had encouraged Tsolakoglu and his generals to quit fighting, the Orthodox Metropolitan Spyridon of Janina, venerable President of the Holy Synod, told the Court the armistice was an act which "honors the officers responsible."

Having demonstrated in lengthy testimonials that the surrender should be blamed, not on the prisoners, but on the entire upper crust in Army and Government, the defense proceeded to show that the quisling regimes were nothing if not patriotic. Tsolakoglu read a long roll of right-wing and centrist politicians still in favor, among them some members of the post-Liberation governments, who had congratulated him for taking power. After his resignation, and as late as June, 1943, he said, no less an institution than British Intelligence urged him to accept the premiership for a second time.

Rear Admiral Economou asserted that he too had been approached by the British to form a government under the Germans: "Members of the Intelligence Service told me it was my duty. Nevertheless, I did not accept." The Admiral gazed benignly around the courtroom and added: "I was invited to the home of Mr. Rallis. He told me: 'I've decided to become Premier. I've just been to see the Archbishop. His Beatitude blessed me, kissed me and wished me good luck.'"

The Beatitude in question, of course, was Archbishop Damaskinos, who later, after Churchill's Christmas trip to Athens during the civil war, became Regent of Greece.

Toward the end of the trial, the royalist newspaper *Embros* felt it safe to conclude, from the way the testimony was going, that the resistance movement had been a "tragic mistake and a crime." When the Prosecutor, in his summing-up, said the Resistance had "served our country and its allies," the defendants screamed their protest. "This Court," cried one, "is not required to eulogize assassins!" "You are praising people whom Churchill called gangsters," cried another. "I agree with him, not with you!"

The point was that the Government agreed, too. Volumes of evidence in the ninety-nine-day trial had proved the undercover unity of the accused with the regime which was now prosecuting them, and their common antagonism to the leftist anti-Nazi Resistance.

After twelve days of nervous introspection, the jury returned a verdict of 132 pages which took two hours and ten minutes to read. It contained three sentences of death, all without a sting. Two of the condemned were abroad. For the third, ex-Premier Tsolakoglu, the Court recommended mercy.

Ex-Premiers Rallis and Logothetopoulos (the latter also *in absentia*) received sentences of life imprisonment. There were three other life sentences, one term of twenty years, eleven terms ranging from eleven years to five—and seven acquittals.

Tsolakoglu announced: "I am calm. I remain proud of my share in the armistice." Rallis raised his eyes to the fly-specked ceiling and piously said: "Forgive them, Father; they know not what they do."*

This, at least, was quite true. Thousands of collaborationists still at large studied the verdict and commenced making happy plans for the future. The punishments failed so obviously to fit the crimes that even the royalist press was shamed into a few uneasy editorials. The republican newspaper *Eleftheria* predicted that if the country were ever again invaded, every Greek would be encouraged to turn traitor.

MUDDLE OF EMPIRE

I think it would be wrong to say that the British wanted the Greek Government to do the repugnant things it did. The truth was rather that the British tolerated the things the Government did, for the sake of other considerations. Britain's chief concern was not the protection or repression of Greek liberties. The big aim was to keep the Russians out.

Greece was Britain's last foothold on a Balkan peninsula dominated by the Soviets. To make this foothold secure, the British were determined to have a permanent rightist or right-of-center government in power. To them, nothing less was a guarantee against ultimate Soviet penetration. If the politicians eligible for Britain's "safe" regime in Greece insisted on the return of the King, they could have him. If the inclination of such politicians was reactionary, well, that was regrettable—but it couldn't be helped.

This program needed to be made palatable somehow to the British people and to world opinion. The result was a policy of double-talk, of zigzag and contradiction and uncertainty, of constant reshuffling of different political groups and personalities in Greece in order to strike just the right formula. Every Greek politician desires to be a cabinet minister—but only if he cannot be a premier. Greek politics being a muddle, British policy was a muddle—and muddled Greek

* Tsolakoglu's death sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment. Ex-Ministers Tsironikos and Kotzamanis, condemned to death *in absentia*, were tracked down in Western Europe and returned to Greece, where at this writing they are still in jail and in good health. As for ex-Premier Rallis, who died in prison in mid-1946, the Government allowed rightists to make his funeral a public demonstration in honor of the departed quisling's memory.

politics even more. General directives from London were clear enough, because London was a long way off. The confusion developed when British representatives on the spot attempted to apply the directives to local complexities. Compounding the confusion was the tendency of some individual Britons in the field to smash evil over the head when they saw it, even at the expense of higher diplomatic interests; and the tendency of practically all Britons in Greece to be dismally sick of the whole desperate problem.

The Plastiras crisis, soon after I reached Athens, was a sample of this chaos. To end the civil war, Churchill had arranged for a regency to reign in Greece until a plebiscite could be held on the question of monarchy. Archbishop Damaskinos was chosen as Regent. But Churchill also needed a Premier to govern, an impartial strong-man who could make Greece peaceful enough to make a plebiscite possible. For this post he brought General Nicholas Plastiras back from twelve years of exile in France.

The General was indeed a strong-man. He was a sort of unambitious man on horseback. Once before he had served his country well. Hero of the Turkish War in 1922, in which he led numerous cavalry charges, he took power by an Army revolt after Greece lost that war. Defeat caused the fall of King Constantine and gave the country some 1,300,000 Greek refugees from Asia Minor to digest. Plastiras met the emergency, supervised elections, told Parliament in effect that "I have done my duty—now you do yours," and retired.

But anybody in Greece could have told Churchill that Plastiras was very stubborn, very anti-king, and had become very much out of touch with political developments in Greece during his absence. The Royalists soon began complaining that he was dawdling over setting a date for the plebiscite. The Left complained about his failure to purge the police and the Army. All factions were made unhappy by his penchant for appointing old friends to important posts in cheerful unawareness that they had changed since their youth and were now violent rightists or leftists and not the good republicans they had once been. The British found that he was acutely sensitive to foreign pressures. When the British Ambassador, Rex Leeper, presented him with a "suggested" list of prefects for appointment to the provinces, the Premier looked him in the eye and said that when Greece became a British dominion, Leeper might make such a suggestion again but not before.

The opportunity to dispose of Plastiras came by way of a scurrilous attack on him in the Royalist press, charging him with defeatism

during the recent war. The charges were fake, but Osbert Lancaster, the British press attaché, gave the tip-off when he began audibly worrying in front of the correspondents about "the scandal these revelations will cause back home when the Laborites get hold of them." Plastiras went to see the Regent. The Archbishop told the Premier he had confidence in him, and to stand fast until the Royalist hulla-baloo died down. But Ambassador Leeper also saw the Regent. He saw him four times. All Athens knew this. Then the Regent sent Plastiras a letter asking for his resignation.

I called on the ousted Premier the next day. He was stunned and bitter. At first he spoke mysteriously of "obstacles" which had prevented him from cleaning out the administration he had inherited. As he talked, he warmed up. Finally it came out.

"My troubles started when I tried to get rid of my Interior Minister," he said. "I was not satisfied with the way he was handling the reorganization of the police. I demanded his resignation. But Ambassador Leeper objected. He told me the dismissal would be undesirable."

"I am a soldier," Plastiras continued, rising agitatedly. "I give orders; I am not in the habit of taking them. And I was the Premier of a sovereign State. Leeper was interfering in internal affairs. I reminded him of my obligation to maintain the dignity of a free Greece. I told him I could not allow him to treat Greece as an occupied country. 'So we are not in agreement?' the British Ambassador inquired. 'No,' I replied, 'we are not in agreement.'"

"After that, I can see now, my days as Premier were numbered. Up to the last minute I hoped the Regent would be able to resist. In my last interview with him, he told me: 'I am convinced of your loyalty to our country—but I am being subjected to very great pressure from you know who. . . .' A few hours later I received his invitation to resign."

And whom did the British select to replace Plastiras? A certain Admiral Peter Voulgaris, a political nonentity and a nasty little fellow, as we all learned when we interviewed him. The Admiral's last noteworthy deed had been in Egypt in 1944, when the Greek fleet joined the Greek Army in revolt against the Government-in-Exile's refusal to give EAM representation in the cabinet. British and Indian troops put down the Army's uprising; Admiral Voulgaris took care of the Navy. Many were killed and thousands were imprisoned. (Some of them were still in jail when Voulgaris became Premier.) This martinet, whom the British now picked to pacify the country impartially, was himself a member of a secret royalist league in the Navy. His accession

was the immediate signal for a fresh raid on leftist offices throughout the country, National Guardsmen answering all protests by explaining that "the General is gone, and the Admiral is a better Greek, you damned Bolshevik."

A favorite lamentation the official British would make to you in private was that they deplored the lawlessness in Greece but that the Greeks were such excitable people and just won't stand for our interference, old chap. The most distinguished personage to give me this view was Lieutenant General Sir Ronald Scobie, commander in chief of all British forces in Greece.

"Do you remember that man Plastiras?" Sir Ronald asked me when he allowed me to interview him in his Athens headquarters about a month after Plastiras' downfall. "Well, he's the type. Very touchy. Very proud. Back in 1922, when he became a benevolent dictator he proceeded to order the hanging of a half-dozen top chaps from the previous regime. The British Ambassador of that day called on him and said, 'Look here, you can't do that.' 'I can and I will,' the Plastiras fellow replied. The Ambassador went away and came back. 'My Government won't have it,' he said. 'I'm afraid that if you proceed with these hangings, my Government will ask me to leave.' 'That will be unfortunate,' said Plastiras, 'but we are in Greece, not Britain, and this is our own affair.' And, do you know, he hanged them."

General Scobie was the author of the letter advising Papandreou, Premier of the first post-Liberation government, that Churchill would not tolerate disbanding of the pro-royalist Mountain Brigade. This was a British-trained unit whose dispersal the Left had demanded as the price of laying down its own arms. The letter was generally credited with having led directly to the civil war. Scobie commanded the combined British-Greek forces against the rebels. His name had become a part of Greek history and geography—"Scobia" was that section of Athens, about a mile square around the Hotel Grande Bretagne, which constituted most of the territory the British effectively held in Greece during much of the fighting.

The General impressed me as the very model of a modern lieutenant general, tall, debonair, confident, with a bit of a resemblance to a middle-aged Errol Flynn. He seemed bent on persuading me that the British wanted nothing better than tranquillity everywhere in Greece. "We don't like this job at all," said he. "We didn't like it right from the start. In fact, I asked for a few American divisions when the trouble began, but I couldn't get them. It's easy enough

to criticize, isn't it? But what can we do in a country like this, when we're spread out so thinly, and everybody wants to shoot somebody else? We're trying to bring the *gendarmérie* up to full strength as quickly as possible. Getting a Police Mission in specially from England to train them. These Greeks are good chaps. A little trigger-happy, maybe, but after all, the leftists did a spot of damage back there, and it's hard to make the others forget. We're drilling and equipping three Army divisions, too. Have to leave something behind when we go, you know. And we can't leave too soon for our taste, I can tell you."

I asked the General when he thought the British troops *would* leave.

"Well, now," he replied, "can't say, don't exactly know." Then he added, prophetically: "We've promised the Greeks we'll stay until things are quiet enough to hold their election. After that, the new regime may want our troops to hang on in case the losing side contests the results. Just a supposition, you know. In that case, of course, they would have to request this from the new Government we'll have in England by that time, after our own coming elections. I should think such a request would be given sympathetic consideration. Yes, I shouldn't be surprised if it were granted. . . ."

THE LION SEES RED

The British were a very jumpy community in the Athens of that day. Although divided among themselves, they were clannish against Americans. They resentfully lumped us with official U. S. policy, which consisted of aloofness soured by an occasional pronouncement of unhelpful criticism. An example of this was the pointless declaration in Washington by the then Secretary of State, Edward Stettinius, that the Greeks had consulted the British Ambassador during the Plastiras crisis but not the Americans. This implied rebuke was met by a loud silence from the British in Athens, to the embarrassment of the American envoy, Lincoln MacVeagh. Worn to a raw edge by the predicament into which their Greek policy had taken them, the British felt that the Americans ought to put up or shut up—and in this they seemed to be right.

Oddly, the British censorship was quite benevolent, despite frazzled tempers. Everything was passed except military data. Old Major "Bunnie" Cumberbatch, the chief censor, used to grumble "piffle" over some of my copy, but he stamped it all, and when it was a story by mail he obligingly licked the envelope shut himself. The correspondents, especially the British, were much more belligerent toward

each other than toward the censorship. They were all still fighting the civil war. Views cut sharply across party and newspaper affiliations. The correspondent of the Laborite *Daily Herald* was violently pro-Churchill; the correspondent of the rock-ribbed London *Times* as violently pro-EAM. This was the first time I had met up with reporters who lacked the cynical indifference traditionally associated with newsmen. They all took sides passionately—an enlightening experience for me, and prophetic of my later Balkan adventures.

Eventually I got into the scrimmage myself, but not through my own choosing. Radio Moscow, of all things, pushed me into it. In consequence, I found myself fighting a one-man defensive action against the British Army as I retreated from northern Greece seven months after its liberation from the Germans.

I had flown up to Salonika for a tour of devastated Macedonia and Thrace. I can confess here that my main purpose was to check reports of widespread persecution of nonroyalists in the northern provinces. But it was nearly impossible for a reporter in those days to rent or buy transportation if he was on a lone-wolf investigation, so I gratefully accepted UNRRA's invitation to go up and inspect that agency's work and problems. Even so, all the facilities came by courtesy of the British military. The plane was a converted Wellington bomber; the *Méditerranée Palace* on the Salonika waterfront was a British-managed billet; the jeep and trailer which took me forward to UNRRA's east Macedonian headquarters in Kavalla were reverse lend-lease, and my driver was a Lancashire corporal.

A curvacious British member of UNRRA's publicity department, one Isobel Hunter, preceded me to Kavalla to insure full military co-operation in my researches. Her presence brought new meaning to the teas on the veranda of The Club. Officers at Brigade headquarters, after a half year of Aegean landscape enlivened only by the periodic flailing of fists, clubs and knives between right-wing and left-wing Greeks, regained their vigor under the sweet breath of air from England. All hearts therefore went out to me, as the direct agent of this delectable visitation. I was also the first American correspondent to have penetrated the northern wilderness since the Brigade's arrival, and hence a person to be honorably and carefully received. A few of the more erudite officers recalled that *PM* had sometimes been less than Anglophile on the Greek problem, but they resolutely put their misgivings aside. "We're all in this together, old boy," I was told warmly, as if to say that bygones were bygones.

The Brigade Major wrote a chit re-assigning jeep and driver to

me for a generous two weeks. The Brigadier had me to mess. The Brigade band was called in to play; each of Isobel's admiring countrymen contented himself with his ration of one dance, but Isobel bravely gave me two.

Meanwhile, I talked with UNRRA officials, observed distribution of relief supplies, and interviewed the Greek Governor-General of Eastern Macedonia. Since it was Good Friday, and he had announced that Athens had sent him funds to make an Easter gift of 500 drachmas (\$3.33) to each destitute citizen of Kavalla, the Governor-General's mansion was besieged by what looked like the entire population. A policeman boosted me through a rear window to keep me on time for my appointment to discuss the problems of rehabilitation. I also talked to certain private Greeks and quietly visited the office of the EAM newspaper *Niki* (Victory). There I examined a smashed dynamo and a bent pickaxe which, the editor told me, rightist National Guardsmen had used on the paper's equipment during a raid the previous week. Finally, loaded with British Army rations and extra cans of gasoline, my Lancashire corporal, a Greek interpreter and I set out for the interior.

Eight nights later we returned, dusty and bottom-bruised from the washboard roads. I planned to use Kavalla as base for another week of exploration. Next morning, however, the corporal appeared at my billet to report he had been ordered to turn in our jeep.

The Brigade Major was waiting on the veranda. He ignored my outstretched hand. "It's no use," he said, "the jeep must be returned."

"But I've planned to go halfway to Serres this morning," I said.

"All transport has been withdrawn from the roads today. Special orders," he replied.

Just then a staff car and a lorry passed each other on the road in front of us. I looked at the Major reproachfully. He turned very red. I waited. He stared straight ahead.

"Well, then, how about tomorrow?"

"Sorry."

"What's wrong, Major? Surely you remember. You were good enough to say two weeks for use of the jeep." I laughed. "Gosh, if I'd known, I'd have stayed out the whole two weeks."

"Then we would have gone out and brought you in," he shot back. His glacial manner was melting down into anger now. "I think a full week of our hospitality is sufficient—under the circumstances. You will return the jeep and all unused rations at once." He walked furiously away.

Back at the billet, Yermanos, my interpreter, sat staring at a copy

of yesterday's *Niki*. "Moscow, May 6," he read. "The Correspondent of the New York newspaper *PM*, Hal Lehrman, writes...free elections impossible...fascist terror...murder...appalling situation... United States must intervene..." At the bottom, an editorial shirt-tail: "Distinguished American correspondent...touring Greece in order to write objective report... world-famed newspaperman recently passed through Kavalla... visited offices this paper...asked for detailed information about barbarous attacks on EAM..."

Holy smoke! In the frenzied garble, I recognized dimly a piece I had filed from Athens (to *The Nation*, not *PM*) before flying to Salonika. The Tass News Agency in New York had pruned it, translated it into Russian and cabled the product to Moscow. Somebody had then turned it from Russian into Greek and put it on the Soviet short wave. Like all leftist Greek editors, the *Niki* man listened to Moscow's transmission daily. He had taken it down in long hand, fixed it up a little more probably, and this was the result.

Off I went to headquarters, searching for the Major, to explain that this was an old story, mangled by editing and double translation; that the original had criticized the leftists too, and the United States, and Russia; that the whole dispatch was a distortion. The Major was unavailable. I asked to see the Brigadier. The Brigadier would not receive me. The others cut me dead.

I stayed on in Kavalla four more days, using an UNRRA jeep, going out of town early, coming in late. I learned that the Governor-General had protested to the Brigadier, who had in turn protested to his commanding general in Salonika. The underground brought me word that up at The Club there were mutterings about "that bloody Red." By this time, I was too angry to care. Didn't the fools know not to take a Moscow date line as gospel? The least they could do was let me explain! And suppose I had said what the Russians quoted me as saying? What of it? If that was what I found in Greece, didn't I have the right to say so? Was the bread and butter supposed to be a bribe?

By the time I arrived back in Salonika, I was burning with outraged virtue. It was therefore a pleasure to hear on the telephone from American Consul-General Bill Gwynn that the General wanted to see me immediately. The General, in fact, had suggested that Gwynn take disciplinary action.

"What did you tell him?" I asked.

"I told him that back home newspapermen write what they please."

Major General C. H. Boucher, commander in chief of British forces in northern Greece, gave me several cups of tea and spoke amiably

about the local political situation for an hour. Finally I brought the Kavalla business up myself.

"Ah, yes," he said. "Communist paper here carried the same sort of story from you. But we had a signal from Athens yesterday. It's all right. They confirm it was something you cleared through censorship down there, and old. The Brigadier shouldn't have made all that flap. I'm telling him so. Can I do anything for you? Sorry we don't have any jeeps loose here. Would a truck do?"

In Athens, Captain Geoffrey Poore, the public relations officer, welcomed me with a grin: "You had a close call. Boucher wanted you discredited and thrown out of the country. We thought for a moment you had slipped something out up North without censorship. But we knew that was unlikely, because there aren't any cable communications except here. Then we checked our carbons, and found something faintly resembling the Moscow piece. Anyway, you're the hero of the Left these days, my lad, so buck up. It'll make a good story for the book. Everybody writes a book, eh?"

FAILURE OF A MISSION

My tour of the hinterland took me into various jails, mountain hideaways and peasant huts. I talked to commanders of Gurkha, Sikh and British troops sitting on the lid throughout the border country; to Greek generals and provincial governors; to right-wing guerrillas, homesick corporals of the National Guard, small-town officials—who were more reliable than their Athenian bosses because they didn't know what I was after and therefore didn't know how to hide it. From all this I emerged with the confirmed conviction that, under the tolerant noses of the British, the Greek forces of "law and order" and the uncontrolled rightist gangs were storing up a sad reckoning by their zeal to make Greece safe for monarchy.

In the town of Drama, I met a young man wearing a bright new uniform and carrying a tommygun. I asked him who his commander was. He said Anton Tsaous. I had been briefed on this Tsaous in Kavalla by the British. They told me Tsaous had led a nationalist resistance band during the Occupation. They said he was now on the inactive list of the Greek Army, holding a captain's reserve commission. No, I was assured, he was not doing anything, just living in retirement. But the tommygunner led me to Tsaous, who wore full uniform too and was busy taking salutes from everybody. "Officially, I suppose, I'm in retirement," he admitted affably. Then he winked. "But there are about a thousand of my old followers here. They refuse to go home, though I tell them to. So what can I do? I find work

for them now and then. Sometimes the National Guard lends them weapons to help in rounding up Communists. The men always ask for me to lead them. How can I refuse?" Drama itself seemed filled with people who regarded Tsaous as their savior from the murderous Bolsheviks. But in outlying villages I found six widows, their husbands buried in the fields after Tsaous' men had departed.

I was somewhere along the Bulgar frontier the day the European war ended, and hurried to Komotini to hear Churchill's Victory speech. My hosts were the officers of the 11th Battalion, Second Royal Sikhs. We sat around gin-and-limes in their mess and listened to the radio. It was a great moment. As Churchill's stirring voice came through, I read and reread the inscription on a captured Nazi banner they had nailed to the wall. In stitched black Gothic letters it quoted a pledge by Hitler from 1941: *Keine Macht und keine Unterstützung der Welt werden am Ausgang dieses Kampfes etwas ändern. England wird fallen!* ("No power and no support in the world will change the outcome of this struggle in any way. England will go down!") I looked around me. Regular Indian Army fellows, veterans of Middle East and Italian campaigns, healthy, tanned British faces, bearded young Sikhs, all spick-and-span, beaming with victory at the end of a well-fought fight. But victory for what? How long before England would "go down" in Greece, for want of remembering the purposes for which her people and her Empire had rallied to defend her?

On Victory Day itself, in Salonika, headquarters of the 4th Indian Division, three persons were killed and an undisclosed number wounded when Greek police and armed royalists used knives and guns on an EAM crowd. The crowd was dancing and singing in celebration of the Allied victory. The clash began in Aristotle Square, the name itself an ironic contrast between the moderation of classic Hellas and the violence of the new Greece. A band concert had been arranged in honor of the day. The American Consul told me about it later, and his story too was symbolic in its way, an unintentional commentary on the confusion of American policy in Greece. He said he heard a great deal of shouting on the outskirts of the densely-packed square. The noise was so loud he couldn't hear the music from his place down front with the other distinguished guests, and he remembered wishing that someone would keep those people quiet. What he really heard was the crowd trying to break through the police lines with the body of a nineteen-year-old girl whose throat had just been cut by a royalist, and place her corpse at the feet of the British officials—and the American Consul.

The shooting broke out in earnest a short time later. The British commander, Major General Boucher, admitted to me candidly that his preliminary inquiry showed the blame fell squarely on the National Guard. If this were confirmed, he promised, he would court-martial the officers and men responsible. Before I left Greece over a month later, I checked the Salonika case and found that no action had been taken.

The fact that Boucher could court-martial Greek officers, if he wanted to, showed who was master in Greece. The trouble was not that the British forces were spread out too thinly, as General Scobie had complained and as General Boucher repeated to me. The fault lay with the British self-compulsion to blink away rightist outbreaks because policy required it.

Many subordinate British officers, in addition, had found it easy to take the simple step from overlooking ugly facts as a matter of policy to approving them as a matter of principle. The majority of the officers I met in the field were as ruggedly convinced as any royalist that nobody was against the King except the Communists, and that opposition to the monarchy was a special characteristic of felons and assassins.

Proof that the British Army could handle trouble when it felt so inclined lay in the refreshing examples I did find of officers who took their mission of pacification seriously.

At Larissa the British commander had his headquarters a discreet ten miles out of town, amid scenes of idyllic tranquillity, while in the town guardsmen were knocking people's heads together with impunity. But at Kozani, less than a day's unhurried motoring from Larissa, the British garrison lived on the main street and policed every crossing. One evening, at a village outside Kozani, frantic peasants blocked the road to tell us that the National Guard had just seized eight men, including the local priest. We raced into town and reported this to the British. They knew nothing about such an arrest and were furious, because the Greek authorities had strict orders to make no arrests without specific British authorization. Their search party quickly found the prisoners huddled in the cellar of the *gendarmerie*, with no light, no air, no food, no blankets. The British Town-Major, after telling the Greek officers precisely what he thought of them, ordered a swift hearing. The priest was called, and confronted with his accuser, a rightist ex-guerrilla. It quickly became apparent that the bearded little priest, charged with all kinds of foul crimes, had done nothing more dastardly than store a few jars of honey in his home for an

EAM friend who was making a fast getaway into the mountains. After this revelation, the British released all the other prisoners and held for court-martial the Greek lieutenant who had ordered the arrests.

And Greece would certainly have been pacified in short order if every British officer acted with the firmness of the 5th Indian Infantry Commander at Verria, a brigadier named J. Sanders-Jacobs. This very admirable soldier was advised that certain National Guardsmen had fired bullets into the air to relieve their exaltation during a religious festival. Here is a portion of the emphatic prose he wrote into an order to his subordinate officers:

According to British military law, this action constitutes an offense triable by Court-Martial and punishable by long terms of rigorous imprisonment. I do not know exactly how the offense is treated under Greek military law but I remind you that I have warned against such acts of indiscipline. I now direct that forthwith you investigate and try the offenders, reporting to me the punishment awarded. I do not accept any excuse to the effect that such acts are the custom of the Greek Army. Any repetition of these offenses will be followed by my ordering the partial disarming of the National Guard. This would obviously have very adverse effects on the prestige of the Greek armed forces and in consequence our combined work of peaceful settlement of the country would be retarded. . . .

TAXES, PRICE CONTROLS AND OTHER FRIVOLITIES

Because Britain stacked her chips on Greek reaction to save the Mediterranean from Bolshevism, she dealt Greece a regime incapable of establishing order. This regime was equally incapable of doing the one thing which might have taken the minds of the Greek people off politics—giving them work.

Creating jobs, restoring industry, reviving agriculture, rebuilding the land—all these required a government willing to draw up a tough economic plan and make it stick, even if it annoyed the rich. Ministers succeeded one another with gay rapidity in Athens, and they all made big speeches about reconstruction, but each came from, or owed allegiance to, the prosperous Kolonaki. For such statesmen, vulgar matters like taxes and price controls were too distressing for contemplation. It was simpler to blame everything on Communism. No amount of help from Britain, and from American taxpayers when the British taxpayers gave up, could make Greece whole again as long as this mentality presided over her salvation.

My journeys by jeep back and forth across northern Greece and then straight down the spine of the country on the return to Athens were

like riding a wheelbarrow in and out the shellholes of a giant battlefield. The roads of Greece were too impossibly bad to be believed. Nothing was being done about them. Nine out of ten bridges in every direction were down. If you could still travel, slowly and with innumerable detours, it was thanks only to British Army engineers and the Indian Army Pioneer Corps, certainly not to the Greek Government. The British had thrown up Bailey bridges and, where the river was too wide, they rigged cable ferries. We crossed the great Strymon River between ancient Thrace and Macedonia on one of these, a raft tied to a sliding chain and propelled by the stream, while the great Stone Lion of Amphipolis, memorial to antique battles, looked scornfully at us down its classic nose from the river shore.

In all my travels, I never once came across a civilian work-gang patching a road or clearing a tunnel. Railroad transportation was nonexistent. The Germans and Bulgarians had used a gadget that blew up the tracks every ten yards as the last troop train retreated. Gone also was most of Greece's *caïque* fleet, on which the country had depended for prewar coastal traffic. Whatever boats the Germans failed to smash as the British fled in them had been blown out of the water by Allied bombers during the Occupation.

A thousand villages had been destroyed during the war. One fourth of the houses in Greece were damaged or gutted, leaving 1,200,000 persons homeless. Displaced Greeks were scattered throughout the country, wanderers in their own land. In northern Greece alone, 150,000 who had fled from the Bulgarian Occupation were waiting idly for repatriation. Because of the transport crisis this repatriation was proceeding at the rate of only 1,200 weekly, under UNRRA supervision. I saw one hundred of these refugees dumped off trucks into an open field in Salonika. They spread blankets and carpets out over the mounds of boxes and bales containing their belongings, and underneath they squatted like desert nomads. At that they were luckier than the rest, because they at least were scheduled to get enough rations—fifteen days' ration for those who lived in the towns, thirty days' ration for those who had to climb to remote mountain villages—and be given a lift as far as wheels could go on the main roads toward home.

The Greece in which these refugees, and those who had managed to cling to their own soil, were expected to start life over again was a Greece which had seen 60 per cent of the national wealth destroyed by war and enemy occupation. Half the country's livestock had disappeared, and even more of the farm machinery. Eighty per cent of the nation's industries had been closed down long ago, soon after arrival of the Germans, for lack of raw materials. Over four-fifths

of the country was malarious, and half the population had been infected. Malnutrition and tuberculosis were endemic. Doctors, nurses, drugs fell critically short; hospitals were piles of rubble or charnel houses of infection. Physical and spiritual apathy lay over the untilled soil, the smokeless factories, the roofless houses. The only national industry which still thrived was politics.

Revival from this devastation demanded, to begin with, a general confidence in the new government and its economic future. Instead, the regime stood helpless before the legacy of financial distrust inherited from the Occupation. The Germans, unconcerned about Greek monetary stability, had met their own expenses by pumping paper money into circulation. By the time they departed, a newspaper cost twenty billion drachmas and it was cheaper to make cord from banknotes than to buy the cord.

The first Liberation government tried to stabilize the currency by issuing new money. Each new drachma was pegged at fifty billion Occupation drachmas. This conversion wiped out the last hope of the white-collar and working classes that something might be rescued from their savings. It did not affect the rich, whose funds were secure in real property and in gold. Gold—especially the sovereign or British gold pound—became the only standard of value in the new Greece, and the new drachma began the usual inflationary dance toward complete ruin.

A false impression of abundance was created by the well-stocked Athens shop windows. I found them crammed with radios, typewriters, sewing machines, cameras, fancy shirts, silk stockings—wares which Greek merchants had been able to hide from the Germans during the Occupation. The only hitch was that perhaps 20,000 Greeks in the whole country could afford to buy these treasures. A pair of shoes cost an Athens Supreme Court Judge's salary for three months. The average Greek had forgotten the taste of sugar, but pastry shops showed him trays heaped high with succulent cakes and candies—displays which the fanciest bakers in Britain or America could hardly rival. The sugar, of course, came from the black market, and the smallest bun, in such shops, cost a dollar. A book of matches cost 30 cents. In this squeeze, the ordinary Greek was the chief casualty, as usual.

Not having any revenue from normal economic activity, the only remedy the Government could offer to meet the distress was the printing of more money. In one month the presses turned out almost as many drachmas as had previously been in total circulation, and

during the following month the Treasury increased the note issue by another 50 per cent. Even so, the civil servants of Salonika went without pay for three months. In Athens, government workers received a bonus for March and another bonus for Easter, but prices kept racing ahead of pay envelopes. Most civil servants, when they had their shoes fixed, had to stay home from work. I knew a once middle-class family where all five children were put to bed on washday because they had no other clothes to wear. Tailors inserted sober advertisements reading: "We mend torn trousers, worn-out pants-knees, sleeves and moth-bitten coats. We turn suits inside out and make them look like new." One newspaper commented: "Next year we may read: 'We design and paint all kinds of clothing on naked bodies. Suits, dinner jackets, overcoats, etc., to suit every taste.'"

Two parallel types of government action were required to pull Greece out of this disaster. First, a stop-gap policy of price controls and rationing had to be imposed to distribute fairly whatever scarce food and goods were available, with taxation helping to meet the obligations of an empty treasury. Second, a recovery policy of industrial and agricultural rehabilitation needed to be launched if the present scarcity was ever to be turned into abundance.

With people working again and producing things possible to buy, farmers would regain the incentive to grow and sell their crops, the fantastic Greek export prices would decline to a level of competition with world prices, and public confidence in the drachma would return.

Instead, the governments of the day treated the economic problem as if it were a medieval disease, something to be cured by exorcism, witchcraft and prayer.

Incredible as it may seem, Greece had practically no income tax. Her governments declined to create any. Only 15 per cent of taxes came from private rents and profits. The remaining 85 per cent came from indirect taxes on foodstuffs and commodities. The system thus soaked the poor and spared the rich.

Nor did Greece have more than a rudimentary system of rationing and price control, although the country was one vast black market for speculators who cornered essential goods and foods for sale to the top bidder. The most the Government would do was breathe fiercely and threaten to hang traders in gold and foreign exchange. Nobody paid attention to such threats, and they were never enforced. The Government argued that controls were totally alien to the Greek tradition. The day after the Germans had executed two hoarders of olive oil, street hawkers in wartime Athens were selling photographs of the bodies swinging in the air—and the price of olive oil had doubled.

Foreign observers, however, knew that the black market could be curbed even in Greece by any Government stable and determined enough to fight it. The real obstacles to controls were twofold: governments picked by the British and representing only the wealthy class had no public support and therefore could win no popular respect for their decisions; controls would have interfered with the profits of major industrialists and black market operators.

Proof of this was the short shrift given to Kyriakos Varvaressos, who entered the Voulgaris government in June as Vice-Premier, with total powers over economics. Inside of three months, by imposing hearty taxes and clamping controls on twenty-four major commodities, he brought the cost of living down from seventeen to ten times the prewar level and brought the wage level up to six times the prewar standard—the best balance of the wage-price ratio yet attained. But in September Varvaressos resigned because his grumbling cabinet colleagues were unable to resist the howlings of the oppressed Kolonaki. Immediately after that, prices began climbing again.

This same greed sabotaged most of the vast effort being made from abroad to spur domestic production of reasonably-priced goods in Greece and restore her foreign markets. But a loan of three billion drachmas, originating in Britain and given to industrialists to get their factories back into operation, was instead sunk by the owners into purchase of gold sovereigns. And UNRRA, which was just beginning to supersede the Army as chief agency for Greece's rehabilitation, had already learned in two brief months of operation that revival would never come if Government officials and their industrialist friends were left to manage recovery.

The only major importation of UNRRA raw materials thus far received was cotton, because Greece's primary need, apart from food and medicine, was clothing. The UNRRA contract provided that the cotton be delivered to the Government free, and that the latter turn it over to the textile industry at a low price. The spools of yarn which emerged from the private spinning mills after this transaction were sold at a net profit of 220 per cent! When the UNRRA cotton finally reached the consumer market, it came disguised in luxury items retailed at sky-high gold prices.

An admiral and several senior naval officers found it easy to get a charter to establish a "Mediterranean Transport Company" and use warships for smuggling gold and foodstuffs into the Greek black market. UNRRA industrial supplies provided a paradise of opportuni-

ties for the officials empowered to mis-allocate the materials at their discretion.

HOW TO TORPEDO A RELIEF SHIP

Relief was a separate and even graver need than rehabilitation, because economic recovery was for the long haul but food and drugs meant literally life or death in the immediate future of millions of individual Greeks. Nevertheless, Greek politics tangled and tripped the legs of UNRRA workers as they hurried to apply first aid to the body of the Greek people. What could you do with a country where a Minister of Health would withhold medicines from leftist villages and justify it by saying: "Greece has had malaria for thousands of years; it is more important to get rid of Communism"? Or how could you manage a country where, because peasants disliked the powdered soup which UNRRA imported, tons of it were diverted to local party bosses who turned it into paste for the backs of political posters?

By contract, UNRRA delivered the supplies and the Greeks distributed them. Technically, UNRRA could only observe and advise on distribution, not control it. Bales of clothing intended for an entire province were expedited by one official exclusively to the town where he had been born. Other officials were filled with active pity for their prosperous friends who needed an extra overcoat while the children of the poor continued to run about in what amounted to nothing stitched together. "These shoes are too good for peasants," one notable assured me, "it is much better to distribute them in the cities, where they will be worn properly." The pipsqueak Governor-General at Kavalla hesitated to co-operate with the overworked Greek nurses attached to the UNRRA medical depot there because the girls had looked after leftist guerrilla wounded during the Occupation.

Between Liberation and the civil war, when the Left had controlled a large part of the country, distribution committees working with the Allied military relief officers had also been prejudiced. But in those days, at least, administration was efficient. The leftist committees made levies on the more prosperous villagers and townsmen to finance soup kitchens for the poor; few supplies were available, but whatever the leftists had, they distributed speedily instead of letting the food spoil in warehouses while making up their minds. The old committees had been swept out after the Varkiza Agreement. Their successors made no further levies. They held innumerable meetings, debated and rebutted, formed subcommittees, consulted

with Athens, while UNRRA flour grew moldy in damp sheds and potatoes rotted.

The tempo was set by the capital, where the governments of the period were so-called "service governments"—that is, not politicians but technicians, who would tide the country over with their expert professional administration until the plebiscite. Thus, the Agriculture Minister in the Voulgaris cabinet was a lawyer, and the Transport Minister was a professor of chemistry! These gentry were filled with a sense of their own importance, and empty of a sense of urgency. One mayor of my acquaintance disdained to distribute an allotment of UNRRA clothing because the pants and dresses were second-hand. In one Macedonian town, the committee chairman, a bishop, told me nothing had yet been distributed because the committee lacked funds to pay a clerk to keep the accounts, and nobody could be found to do the job for nothing. In the port of Kavalla, an UNRRA team worked through an entire night to unload an emergency cargo of flour, but in the morning the Greeks decided to wait for another delivery before distributing what they had—because the amount received was somewhat less than the ration scale per person required.

With inefficiency came inefficiency's handmaiden, corruption. Salonika was a shining example. UNRRA supplies there found their way doggedly into the black market. This was pardonable in the case of the destitute who chose to sell a part of their bread ration in order to get money for something else they needed. But many fairly prosperous Salonikans carried several ration cards, and I met one man who had as many as fifty. When a precious cargo of low-cost shoes arrived in Salonika, most of it went to people who didn't need shoes but did know a distribution official. Within a few days, the shoe stores were loaded with pairs of the UNRRA model, priced beyond reach of the bare-footed part of the population.

Public outcry over the various scandals committed in the name of UNRRA became drearily frequent. The prevailing state of nerves often led newspaper editorial writers to blast away at UNRRA instead of the guilty Greek officials. In self-defense, UNRRA's central headquarters in Athens finally had to turn a daily news bulletin it issued into a broadsheet analyzing the latest charges against it and placing the blame where it belonged.

Not that UNRRA itself was a monument of efficiency. Like every sprawling bureaucracy, it had its quota of deadheads and incompetents, dashing young men who came to Greece for adventure, kind elderly ladies with a humanitarian itch but baffled by the complexities

of the Greek brain, superwell-bred characters who hobnobbed with the socially acceptable Greeks—the Greeks in power—and dismissed the others as troublesome. One could meet all these types in the provinces, burning up gasoline as they drove empty fifteen-hundred-weight trucks on eternal “field trips” from one ruined classic site to another. But the majority of UNRRA workers were serious people aware of their serious job. Their mission to Greece did manage to accomplish a heroic amount.

Cost was high and waste appalling, but UNRRA unquestionably saved hundreds of thousands of Greeks from starvation or disease. Despite all obstacles, too, UNRRA was able to inject a diluted shot into the withered arm of Greek economy, importing trucks, tractors, farm tools, seed, fertilizer, building supplies, railway equipment, raw materials—a substantial portion of which was put into useful service. If the UNRRA achievement was not higher, if the \$354,000,000 expended by its member nations stopped dismally short of Greece's rehabilitation, the major fault fell on the addled heads of the Greek politicians whose self-seeking and plain incapacity blocked the way to recovery.

Early in its Greek career, UNRRA saw the fatal weakness of a contract which made it legally impotent to interfere directly with Government maldistribution of relief and rehabilitation supplies. Before two months were passed, Buell F. Maben, the hard-hitting young American chief of the mission in Athens, was instructing his regional representatives to take arms against the Greek sea of troubles and use all devices short of personal assault to hinder local officials from administering distribution according to prejudice and whim.

The shrewd UNRRA representative grappling with Greek obfuscations in the remote interior had two keen weapons in his arsenal: his Allied uniform, which carried great prestige even without any brass on the shoulders; and his ability sooner or later to reach the ear of Athens with his bill of complaints. Some UNRRA agents lacked the ringing voice and the jutting jaw required to overawe their Greek antagonists. Others were glad to break even. And an élite few rose to unchallenged supremacy by sheer strength of will. In the districts which these chosen ones ruled with benign determination, UNRRA achieved its finest victories.

Such a man was Colonel L. B. von Spach, veteran of World War I, former real estate operator from Milwaukee, latter-day Greek hero without laurels, dispenser of life and arbiter of justice high, middle and low for the inhabitants of some hundred mountain villages in

strife-torn Western Macedonia. For this most unforgettable of the characters in my Greek catalogue a few pages of record here are necessary as minimum tribute.

SACRAMENTALS FOR SERVIA

Driving Colonel von Spach in my jeep around his UNRRA bailiwick was like riding down Fifth Avenue on one's way to pick up the keys of the city. There were fewer people, of course, and no ticker tape or telephone books, but whatever peasants could hear us coming were out there cheering when we passed. Besides, Fifth Avenue doesn't grow flowers. Every villager on our route during the two days we toured his territory had a bushel of roses for the Colonel. I always slowed down to practically nothing in the populated places, because a rose tossed into your face at fifty kilometers an hour is no powder puff.

This fifty-five-year-old youngster from Milwaukee was tall, thin, gray and leathery. He wore an American officer's shirt and British combat jacket, G.I. pants and a cocky overseas cap. He moved with the speed of half his age and drove his three-ton truck like a freshman. He had to, because the war had left more than a million Macedonians destitute. The only source of supply for one-third of them was L. B. von Spach.

Apart from his name, he was about as German as popcorn. I never did find out his first name, and I don't think the Macedonians knew his last. They called him "*Oloi Mazee*," meaning "All Together," and rendered like a college yell. The name stuck from back in the early days, when he got a crowd of right-wing and left-wing peasants to stop fighting long enough to push his truck loaded with food out of a snowdrift. He yelled "*Oloi mazee!*" and they got together and shoved, and that's what they called him ever since.

He was holding up his pants and looking for a belt when I first met him in his little red-roofed house in Kozani. "Look at this," he said, showing me the space between his midriff and pants-waist. "There's twenty-five pounds gone out there and lying all over Macedonia. This ain't like selling real estate back in Wisconsin." Then he saw my war correspondent insignia. "Guess I better be dignified. But first, how about some Spam and a coupla cans of beer. Hey, Wouly!"

This was Wouly Prokopis, late of Ypsilanti, Michigan, wider than the Colonel but just as fast. Wouly had been von Spach's sergeant in France last time. The "old man" had found him again in his native

Macedonian town of Grevena. He did the interpreting, fixed flat tires, opened the door, answered letters, and told bad jokes.

Von Spach watched Wouly making lunch. "Wouly's my whole staff right now. I've got two British Red Cross girls, but they'll be out in the hills for a few more days. Eileen Pittar and Grace Franklin. Grand girls. Work eighteen hours a day, and when the road's too tough they walk. Been setting up soup kitchens all over Western Macedonia. In between, they go around curing kids of scabies and worse. I'm recommending them for citations."

Back in Salonika, they had told me about von Spach at UNRRA headquarters. "He has this political business licked," I was informed. "The only politics he allows is co-operation. The British Army in his district swears by him. He's got all the officials scared to death, and everybody else loves him. On both sides. He even went into the mountains once and talked a leftist band out of raiding a village where the mayor was shoving their relatives around. When we told him not to take such chances again, he said 'Hell, nobody's gonna shoot Santa Claus.' That's what he is. He not only feeds, clothes and doctors them. He's umpire in all their political arguments. He's getting them to rebuild their burned and bombed-out homes. He's making them work instead of debate. You ought to go see him..."

The Colonel spread a military map of his district on the kitchen floor. It was pockmarked with crayoned circles around the towns and larger villages—Kozani, Grevena, Tsotylyon, Siatista, Velvendos, Servia and so on. The sheet was black with heavy contour lines, indicating mountains.

"These are our supply dumps," he explained. "They're more or less reachable by motor. The double problem is to have stuff to dump there, and then to get it out of there into the hills. Telegram came in from Salonika this morning: 'Further supplies unavailable remainder month sorry.' That means we'll have to cut one loaf of bread into seven pieces to have something for everybody just in the towns. And even if we had enough, and all the trucks UNRRA owns were working twenty-four hours a day, we'd still only be able to reach 40 per cent of the people. Brother, this is a ruined country. The Jerries and their pals took out everything, livestock, grain, buses, locomotives, everything. There are villages going hungry because we don't have burros or carts to take food up the mountain trails to them."

He told me he had returned last night from Grevena. "May have to get the Governor-General to throw the prefect out of there. He's announced he won't give pants to Communists. I told him nine-tenths of these so-called Communists aren't Reds at all, but they're

going to be if he keeps it up. I even said if nobody else started a revolution against him, I'd lead it myself. He's pretty nasty because he knows the Government in Athens is behind him. But his boss out here is much more reasonable—and I've convinced him I can stop shipments from Salonika if there's any political monkeying with supplies. Anyway, I did manage to fire the warehouse manager of the Agrarian Bank. That's the outfit that distributes out here for the government. He called one of his assistants a Communist Bulgarian—the worst name he could think of—and sacked him because the man wanted to send seed out to the farmers on a holiday."

After we finished the canned sliced pineapple, Wouly fished out a little Greek Bible with beautiful hand-carved wooden covers. The dedication was to "*Oloi Mazee*." The story about this was that two rival priests had been exhorting their congregations in one village to fight for the King and against him. The Colonel drove in and made a speech from the top of his truck. He told the peasants they should go to their churches next Sunday because both priests were going to sermonize about brotherly love and he wanted the people to report to him if they didn't. Later, the priests chipped in and bought the Bible for him.

We drove out of von Spach's sun-baked lane into the Kozani town square. It was right here the cheering, applause and roses started. I had been driving around Greece for two weeks, and the only thing ever thrown at me was a daisy, and once a few sheaves of wheat that almost cut my nose off, so I knew the shouting wasn't for me or even for the paper American flag pasted on my windshield.

"I want you to see this place called Servia," the Colonel said as he ducked the flowers and waved back at the citizenry. "Servia used to have four thousand people. It was 100 per cent destroyed. Not one house out of eight hundred left standing. About twenty-one hundred people are back there now. It's wonderful the way they've pitched in. Servia's my favorite corner of Greece."

We bumped over cratered roads and stopped a minute at Vethilakos, about halfway out. The whole village rushed up to surround us. Von Spach announced that a teacher would be coming in the next week, also milk for the little fellows and soup for everybody over six.

When we reached the Aliakmon River, the Colonel took the wheel. The bridge was gone. He drove down a forty-five-degree decline to get us aboard a cable-ferry raft. This was exciting enough, but when a herd of goats clambered aboard and the chief goat jumped off in midstream, threatening to coax the rest of them and us with him, the ride nearly became an epic. But the goats decided to stand firm

at one end of the raft, and we made land with the other end in the air. Von Spach pointed to a clump of red on the side of a mountain.

"That's Velvendos," he said. "Servia's off down that way," and he waved to the south. "Our first delivery of clothing for Servia was dropped from an RAF plane. Only trouble was the bundles landed on Velvendos. Thought we had a first-class diplomatic crisis. You see, they needed clothes at Velvendos too. The town declared a holiday when the parachutes came down. We were afraid that recovering the packages would be like robbing the First National in broad daylight with all the depositors watching. But we explained that Servia needed the stuff more, so the Velvendosians took off their new shirts with a smile. Marvelous people."

The word for Servia was annihilation. They came out of caves, tents, corners of broken wall with branches and sheets of tin piled on top. But everybody was beaming with delight to see the Colonel.

"We've just put a second floor back on the doctor's house," said the mayor. "Now our hospital has a roof." The warehouse custodian, a merry little man in a grocer's apron, swept us into the old town hall, which had two new wooden walls to go with the surviving stone ones, and pointed proudly to some rows of benches. "The best warehouse is an empty warehouse. We have distributed all our supplies. Now we have room for a school too."

Everybody was busy, despite the malnutrition you could see in their faces. There was a big drive on for nails, and old and young were poking through the wreckage for them. All around was the clang of hammers and the grunt of the saw.

A priest with a little black silk hat like a mushroom and a wonderful white beard said timidly to the Colonel: "Would your friends like to see our church?"

It wasn't much more than an oversized hut, constructed from uneven planks, odd bricks and jagged blocks of tree trunks. It was the first building they had put up. Maybe fifty people could get in at one time, but no more. The altar and pulpit were of plain timber. Overhead was a cross, made from two straight trimmed branches. There were no windows, only the light of an oil lamp hanging dimly from the rafters.

The Colonel pointed to the holy pictures on the wall. "We borrowed these from villages in the neighborhood. They made the old priest very happy. Now all he needs is some sacramentals. The Archbishop in Salonika is trying to find a gold chalice and a paten. Vest-

ments for the service would be useful, too. I've written to a Greek society in America. It's not the sort of thing I could ask Washington for, but they want it here as much as bread."

The jeep was nearly invisible under the flowers when we returned to it. We scooped away just enough of them to sit down in it and see through the windshield, and then we drove away. Von Spach stared thoughtfully into the falling night.

"You know," he said suddenly. "I remember reading a book about a bell. Can't remember the rest of the name. It was by some young fellow, and it told about a church and the war. It was a very true book. If you write anything about today, find out what the book was called and give your story the same kind of name."

DRANG NACH NORDEN

While UNRRA labored and the governments in Athens slumbered over the urgent needs of reconstruction, the one hundred-per-cent patriots on the extreme Right were urging the battle-weary Greek people to get ready for imperial adventures.

Blue being the national color, the walls of Athens were splashed with blue-painted signs in big letters saluting *Megali Ellada* ("Greater Greece"), a dream-world Greek Empire, made from fat chunks of territory to be contributed by each of Greece's neighbors. The young royalists who dashed through the streets with paint pots used their brushes vigorously to explain just how this kind of Greece could be created. "Our Army Must Occupy Southern Albania," one sign suggested. "On to Monastir," another recommended.

Bulgaria was the target for the fiercest slogans of the amateur Greek muralists. Italy and Germany, the original architects of Greece's ruin, were hardly noticed. It was taken for granted that these countries would be made to pay reparations, and that not much else could be torn from them because they were too far away. But Bulgaria was something else. Bulgaria was close by, on Greece's north-eastern frontier. Bulgaria had invaded Greece three times in thirty years. Bulgaria was the darling of the hated Russians. Bulgaria, therefore, was a ripe candidate for Greek revenge.

To tell the truth, the grudge against Bulgaria was not hard to understand. The Bulgarians had long coveted Eastern Macedonia and Western Thrace, including the strategic Aegean port which they called Dedeagach and the Greeks called Alexandroupolis. As Hitler's accomplices, they had swarmed into and beyond these territories in 1941 and established an Occupation which lasted for three years. It was an Occupation which the Greeks were not likely to forget.

The Bulgarians had quite frankly set themselves to stamp out all traces of the Greeks. They banned the Greek language, made the Greeks change their names to Bulgar ones, rechristened every town and village on the map, rewrote the signs on the street corners and over the shop windows, deported Greek teachers, priests, doctors, lawyers and officials. They brought in thousands of Bulgar functionaries, merchants and colonists.

With unflinching logic, the Bulgarians had also done what they could to wipe out the Greek people as well as their memory. More than half of every farmer's crop was seized in taxes. The Greeks were kept on starvation rations, while the Bulgar colonists ate abundantly. The soldiery had a field day of plunder, and killed when resistance was offered. I talked to too many relatives of victims to dismiss the repeated account of Bulgar savagery as mere atrocity stories. Greeks were executed on the flimsiest pretexts, and not by firing squads or hangmen—but by beatings with wooden clubs and iron bars until they died. The Bulgar gentleness may be gauged by the fact that the Greeks fled, when they could, to the bordering German occupation zone, which was a land of joy and contentment by comparison.

The crowning achievement of this "Bulgarization" program came at the end of 1941, when the Bulgars deliberately started a rumor in the Drama region that revolt had flared elsewhere in Greece. As soon as the first Greeks, encouraged by this report, went for their hidden weapons, the Bulgar Army fell to work. Within a week, according to lowest reliable estimates, it had massacred 5,000 Greeks. The whole Occupation period, in short, was a blot on the face of Bulgarian history.

It was therefore quite natural for the Greek people to think less than kindly of their neighbor to the northeast. In all Greece, only the Communist Party dared to say amiable words about Bulgaria, on the strength of the fact that a leftist regime had since been installed there with Soviet blessing. Republicans and moderate royalists alike insisted that protection against future Bulgar aggression demanded substantial cession of territory atop the Rhodope Mountains, over which the enemy had poured in all three of his Greek invasions. The moderates also called for territory from Albania, Greece's neighbor on the northwest, through which the Italians with Albanian help had launched their own attack. The latter claim, however, was based on ethnic grounds rather than military expediency, since the Albanian territory—Northern Epirus—contained an indisputably large Greek population.

None of the moderates proposed to obtain these territories by any

other way than negotiation. They looked to their wartime allies, the Big Three, or to the United Nations, to give them justice in the peace treaties. Even the pro-royalist regime in Athens refrained from openly advocating more muscular methods. But the irresponsible royalist gangs which supported the regime showed less delicacy. And the farther you got away from Athens, the less compunction even official agents of the government had about showing their hand. The real hope and prayer of the reaction was for the one international break which could give a fascist-minded Greece room to expand: a victorious war waged by the United States and Britain against the Soviet Union.

I happened one day to attend a festival in the Didymotikon National Guard mess-hall. It was a holiday, of which there are many in Greece, and the party was well lubricated with *retsina* wine. The officers fairly glowed with super-patriotism. Everybody made a speech. The same thing was said by all, but the battalion's commanding officer, opposite whom I sat, with a mountainous platter of skewered lamb between us—in a hungry country—said it best. "Greece," he cried, "has fought and bled beside her noble Allies. Now that she has won, she will take what is hers by sacred right—with the help of her heroic Anglo-American comrades!"

"On to Sofia!" cried the officers and their girls.

The battalion interpreter on my left, an intense little second lieutenant who had once been an apprentice barber in New York, muttered: "On to Moscow!"

In Salonika a few days later I asked the leader of a little café orchestra to play one of my favorite Russian songs. He looked toward a table where two Greek Army officers sat with some civilians who wore in their lapels the badge of the royalist gang called "X." "Please forgive me," he pleaded, "but they would break the furniture and my head." He played another waltz.

The extreme Right, in its incendiary way, was being superbly consistent. All parts of the plot fitted neatly. Restoration of the King would vindicate nationalist ideals and a strong foreign policy, because the crown was the mystic symbol of the Fatherland. The lure of glory beyond the frontiers would distract people from their misery inside the frontiers—a classic device of reaction. Suppression of the extreme Left would eliminate the Soviet "Fifth Column." Hamstringing of the moderate Left and Center would eliminate two other evils: republicanism and those elements in Greece which were the staunchest supporters of the United Nations idea. What would remain? A

regime dedicated to reaction at home and adventures abroad, a Greece internally safe for the bankers and industrialists, externally safe for expansion toward the happy frontiers of *Megali Ellada*—provided Greece's partners in this pleasant enterprise, the democracies of the West, took proper action against the eastern barbarians.

This vision of the future made the day-by-day rightist tactics simple and efficient. A few thousand Slavic Greeks in Macedonia, for instance, had accommodated themselves easily to the rule of their Slavic cousins from Bulgaria during the Occupation. This was an excellent pretext now for hounding not only them but tens of thousands of other Slavo-Macedonians who had remained completely loyal to Greece. By an extension of logic, it also served to justify the harassment of any other citizen, no matter how pure his Greek origin, as a hireling of Moscow if he betrayed the smallest sympathy for Russia or for the notion of a lasting peace by agreement between Russia and the West.

From the British and American point of view, however, it seemed to me that this program of the Greek rightists was closer to criminal lunacy than to grandeur. Persecution of the Slavic minority in Macedonia was likely to inflame Greece's relations with her northern Slavic neighbors, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia. From this it would be an easy step to embroilment with their powerful friend, the Soviet Union, which was until then pointedly ignoring the royalist antics in Greece. And the campaign against all ordinary democrats, it was plain to see, could serve only to drive more and more of them into the other extremist camp, until Greece would really be divided into two armies between whom no solution could prevail except a war to the death. Where then, even by a Tory-dominated Britain's own terms, would there be security for Britain in such a strife-torn, poverty-ridden Greece? And what good would such a Greece be to America, which presumably had fought the war for more important things than the comfort of the Kolonaki and the tranquillity of Mr. Churchill? And, the most vital question of all, what good would such a Greece do to the cause of world peace?

This, then, was the situation in Greece as I saw it when I left Athens in June, 1945, one month before the British electorate voted Churchill out of power.

Greece was the first station in my tour of the Balkans. The Balkans on the other side of the line, the countries under Soviet influence, still lay ahead of me. I knew that they too, were less than Elysian, but I was prepared to accept a great deal of imperfections after what I had observed in Greece. I felt that the iniquities in Greece, and the threat

which she presented to world stability, could be dispelled only by vigorous reversal of British policy, assumption of responsibility by the United States, and joint invitation by the Western Powers to Russia to collaborate in search of a formula which might produce a government by, and for, the Greek people. As I cabled to *The Nation* toward the end, Greece "is where Yalta should begin."

From Athens' port of Piraeus I sailed across the Aegean and through the Dardanelles on a Turkish steamer to Istanbul.

In that old capital of Turkey, and in her new one at Ankara, I took notes on another kind of pro-fascist reaction, much further advanced than the embryonic Greek variety. For the Turks are the opposite pole from the Greeks, the Greeks having too much politics and the Turks not enough. I found the same police state flourishing in Turkey as during my OWI term of duty there. Like Greece a breeding ground of rabid anti-Sovietism, Turkey certainly offered me no excuse to revise upward my low estimate of the democracy which the Americans seemed to be sponsoring by default and the British by design in this corner of their world.

A quick look at Syria and the Lebanon, then on to Palestine.

Swinging around the Middle East, I was really marking time until I could begin my projected tour of the lands where Soviet influence was paramount. From Athens I had applied for entry into Tito's Yugoslavia. I was in Jerusalem, shuttling between Sternist grenade-throwers and assorted *effendis* related to the Grand Mufti, when U. S. Army Public Relations in Cairo phoned that Belgrade had radioed my clearance. I flew to Cairo that night. A day later I was in Naples, take-off point for Air Transport Command flights into the Russian Balkans.

**THROUGH
THE
CURTAIN**

3

Belgrade Notebook: Arrival

Throughout my Balkan journey, I kept a record of main events. It was a notebook rather than diary. In it I summarized incidents and situations every few days, whenever they seemed complete enough to put down. The next two Yugoslav chapters, with deletions of the purely personal, are borrowed from that notebook. They show, better than anything I could write in retrospect, how and why I began to change my mind.

TAKE-OFF

When the C-47 came down at Bari to refuel, we hobbled off our bucket seats for breakfast in the pilots' messhall. Everybody sat at one big table except a neat little man with a careful mustache. He hadn't said a word since we assembled at Naples airport before dawn. I peeked at his ticket during the Bari check-off. Nationality, Yugoslav. "They hardly ever talk any more," the navigator muttered. So I carried my coffee over to the Yugoslav's lonely corner and tried my French on him. He took my cigarette and answered in fair English. The name was Stane Krashovets. He was on his way home from the San Francisco Conference, where he'd been a delegate. He wore a new ready-made suit and overcoat, and a new Adam hat. (He showed me the label with shy satisfaction.)

What did he think of America? Why, that depended on what I thought of Yugoslavia, he replied. No, I said, I meant what did he think of American customs, manners, cities, women—the usual conversational opening gambit. He repeated: "Let us first see what you think of Yugoslav customs, manners, cities, women. We think well of people if they think well of us." He warmed up a little when I mentioned my being a *PM* correspondent. "You may find some of us unfriendly in Belgrade," he said. "Except for government officials and newspapermen, most Yugoslavs do not know that *PM* is pro-Tito. Anyway, you are sure to be comfortable. The correspondents have one of our best hotels," he added ruefully. "I do not know where I am

going to stay—or even what my next job is. Flats and jobs are filled quickly. There is so much to do, it is not possible to wait, not even for officials returning from government missions.”

Thad Martin, UNRRA administrative officer returning to Belgrade, joined the passenger list at Bari. His half-dozen cases of Red Cross supplies and crate of coffee [“for the staff”] doubled our weight. “Don’t believe that stuff about Yugoslavs not liking Americans,” he grinned. “It’s the Partisans who give us the dirty looks, but there aren’t many Partisans, not real ones.”

After the smooth nothingness above the Adriatic, we dropped under the clouds for a sharp view of the Dalmatian Islands. The coast was craggy and crusty. We cut low across mountains desolate as the moon—the recent battlegrounds of Bosnia. Easy to see how guerrillas could hold great empires of this impossible territory in the middle of enemy occupation. Sarajevo lay sunken in a rocky bowl on the relief map below us. A terrain where only inspired goats could maneuver. Then the air pockets over the craters and peaks dispelled further interest in the landscape. Krashovets grew green, my ears rang with distant bells, and the UNRRA man seemed preparing to deliver an unscheduled shipment of food to Yugoslavia, when Belgrade rose up to save us.

LANDING

The ATC sergeant in charge of American arrivals walked me to a wood-and-tin shanty which doubled as Ticket and Security Office. The blond young Yugoslav inside wore a patch on his gleaming pants, a blouse of multiple origin, and a red star on his khaki cap. He examined my passport, then commenced looking for my clearance papers in the jungle of documents bunged into a drawer of his ancient desk. He looked and looked. “Uh-oh,” said the ATC sergeant, “Well, it was nice knowing you.” The young Yugoslav grew visibly colder. He glanced thoughtfully at me, then out the window at the plane in which I had come. “Tell him, for God’s sake, to phone the Embassy, the OWI, the Foreign Office, somebody,” I said. He began ringing up a number with an air of wasted time. Then, over his shoulder, I saw my name typed in Cyrillic characters on one of the documents. It was written Hal instead of Harold Arthur, my passport name.

I took my first lesson in Serbian from three jovial inspectors at the Customs House next door. One was a Serb, the second a Croat, the last a Slovene—the new “Democratic Federative Yugoslavia” in microcosm and getting along very well together. I learned how to conjugate *ja sam* (I am), how to count up to ten and say “How

do you do, where is the men's room?" Serbo-Croat being first cousin to Russian, in which I can say all these things, thanks to some weeks with a grammar in New York, I astonished the tutors by my linguistic aptitudes.

I descended unannounced upon the Hotel Moskva. The head porter excelled in cordiality. He commandeered three Partisan soldiers in the lobby to haul my gear. Room 209 was a bit longer and wider than a wardrobe trunk. "It is just for the night," he apologized in Franco-German. "Tomorrow, when we have with the Propaganda Ministry consulted, there will be something much better, *naturellement*." What was the room rent? "No charge, no charge at all, rent-free until the first of August. This hotel, it is requisitioned for guests of the State. Administered by the Military Governor. His office has been too busy to fix the rates. Next month we will be returned to civilian management, always by the State, *natürlich*, and then the rates will be fixed. Meanwhile, a pleasant good evening."

I tried the tap in the shower. It produced a sucking sound and a sigh, but no water. The washbowl was also defeatist. I went looking for *Gospodin* Tomashitch. "*Mais oui*, the water, there is no water, not above the first floor, it is the pressure, very feeble. The fascists, I mean the Germans, damaged it. Follow me." He led me to a public shower room on the first floor where the water was cold but flowing. Thus revived, I ate a humble meal of reluctant potatoes and something reminiscent of custard, I hope. Then wearily to bed, at 9 P.M., having bucket-seated a million miles between Africa and Serbia in two days.

An hour later I awoke with a knowledge of acute but unfathomable discontent. When the light switched on, there they were, the legendary Balkan bedbugs, long familiar from the chronicles of famous travelers and now making a personal debut for me, with full chorus, a gala production number. Groping into my bathrobe, I staggered wrathfully downstairs and tried to communicate the nature of the crisis to a venerable night porter. His Serbian was beyond reach of my eloquence. Two passing chambermaids with fragmentary German, going off duty for the night, guessed the situation mostly from my colorful gestures, and explained it to the porter. He said, yes, there was one vacant room with a clean bed on the first floor (everything is on the first floor), but a Russian gentleman was coming tomorrow at eight in the morning to occupy it. In my anguish I said: "To hell with the Russian gentleman, and I'll probably be out of bed by 8 A.M. anyway. I'm moving in now." And I did, abetted by

my two fat, clucking and sympathetic chambermaids, who fetched white linen and tucked me into Room 125, and promised me the sleep of the righteous because "the bugs never come down from the second floor."

Petulance subsided and philosophy returned as consciousness flowed gently away: Well, I'm in Socialist territory at last; in a country where Communists are not only respectable but in power, where Soviet techniques are not remote and distorted by second-hand reporting but real and visible; where I may find the answer to many hopeful questions.... Those bedbugs, they were old-regime bedbugs, not fair to blame them on the new regime, not fair....

UNIFORMS AND RUSTICS

The American and British contingents here get lost in the mass. You notice them only when their jeeps go by. The Russians are established in strength. More of them in the Hotel Moskva than the rest of us put together, and on every street. They're all heavy with medals, an innocent frailty shared by the Partisans. So far (three days), no luck in making any Russian acquaintances. They stomp past you stolidly, not unfriendly, just uninterested.

The new Yugoslav Army must be doing a high-pressure recruiting job. There seem to be almost as many Partisan soldiers as civilians. Every public building is under twenty-four-hour sentry duty, even the Moskva, where the guards hold tight to their tommyguns and knock themselves out clicking their heels to each incoming and outgoing uniform, including mine. The military populate Belgrade so thickly, sections of the strolling street crowds look like army divisions on furlough. I guess this is more optical than real. Uniforms always stand out, especially the Partisans' because they have so many different kinds. They run the spectrum of all the field colors, from light gray through khaki to olive green and nautical blue. The colors don't necessarily indicate various branches of the service. Two men in the same company could have totally different uniforms. Everybody apparently takes what he can get when an allotment of cloth becomes available.

There was no minimum age limit for Tito's army during the Occupation. I've seen dozens of boy soldiers. One looked so young I had to stop and ask him about it. He was thirteen, a second lieutenant, and entitled to his rank. He told me he'd been a dispatch runner in the hills, sneaking through enemy lines with messages between Partisan detachments. "Comrade Tito himself gave me my commission after our Liberation from the fascist killers," he said. "Comrade Tito asked me to remain on guard until our new Yugoslavia is safe." He

glared at me as if I had come direct from Wall Street with a bag of capitalist gold. I liked the boy, nevertheless. I'm sure he's more of a hero than I was at thirteen, or than I could ever be.

The little lieutenant still wore his revolver. They all tote shooting irons here. The war doesn't seem quite over in Belgrade. The newspapers talk constantly about vigilance against home-guard reaction. A ten o'clock curfew was in force until the night before my arrival, eight months after Belgrade's liberation. Rifle and machine-gun fire peppered the city's sleep. It still is advisable, when a Partisan guard occasionally shouts *Stoi!* (Stop!) after dark, to *stoi* and stay *stoied* till he's had a good look at you.

The new Belgrade also has a rustic flavor. This Balkan capital never looked cosmopolitan, but its small-towniness is sharpened now by an enormous colony of provincials. They are easily distinguishable. The regular Belgraders dress like the bourgeoisie of any European city, sedately and properly. The provincial has his tie missing, or a jacket of one texture and trousers of another, new shoes that are too tight or old shoes still stained from the cake of village mud. The newcomers hail mostly from Bosnia, Macedonia and Montenegro. These were the regions most underprivileged and miserable under the old regime. They gave Tito his staunchest fighters. Today they rate highest in his gratitude. Some are here to work on government jobs, others because their villages were destroyed. Space has been made for them in flats confiscated from collaborators or requisitioned from the overcomfortable bourgeoisie.

My Hotel Moskva sits on the edge of Terazije, Belgrade's Times Square. When night comes, itinerant fiddlers converge on Terazije. The square turns black with peasants dancing the *kolo*, traditional folk step of the Yugoslavs. They form an unbreakable circle, each dancer stretching out his arms to clasp the hands of the dancers once removed on right and left. This makes for a firm grip and free wheeling. Most of the dancers are lads in ragged Partisan uniform or mountain gear, and oily-haired girls in blouses and big-bottomed skirts, all bathed in a sweat of enthusiastic fierceness. The girls of Belgrade, rather attractive as a class and fairly *soignée*, absent themselves from this unseemly mirth. As for the Belgrade males, any bourgeois who has to emerge at night lingers rarely in Terazije.

THE VANISHING BOURGEOIS

If the snubbed and snobbish bourgeoisie still retain a stronghold, it is at a café aptly named *Ruski Tsar* and aptly located on Prince

Michael's Street, where they can still congregate for polite conversation. Even the physical structure of the place is symbolic of the middle class's present position: menaced by upheaval from below. The establishment has two levels. The café, on the street floor, is patronized almost exclusively by its once top-dog, prewar clientele. But the restaurant downstairs, as far as I could see the other evening, has been taken over by younger Partisan officers and their sturdy girl friends. The atmosphere below ground is distinctly chilly to strangers. Lapteff of the French News Agency and I got the usual glassy-stare treatment. It's an odd sensation, to be wearing American uniform which everywhere else in my present travels has meant welcome, but here has so far failed to provoke even a nod of the head. . . .

A six-piece orchestra worked loudly and with good intention on ballroom dance music, much of it prewar Hollywood. A large lady in spangles rendered frequent Gypsy songs, Yugoslav and Russian. One of the dancers was a young Soviet captain, rather good-looking, in full uniform and decorations with flapping blouse and heavy belt. He wore big black boots, which he clumped on the floor at intervals to accentuate the beat and his good spirits. Sometimes he would pound a few extra stomps to show what fun he was having. One strap crossing his chest from his right shoulder held a small dispatch case which bumped the other dancers on his more energetic turns; from his left shoulder another strap crisscrossed the first and held a loosely-holstered revolver which also bumped the dancers. In addition, the captain wore his hat.

Lapteff's girl, with an air of resenting the accusation, tells me the upstairs café is viewed darkly by the Government as a hideout of speculators and black marketeers. A blood-curdling campaign has opened against illegal traders in food. The newspapers are publishing daily denunciations of the profiteers. Those who can't afford to buy newspapers, or can't believe things they read in print after three years of Occupation propaganda, are admonished by the very stones of the city. Anti-black market slogans are whitewashed on the pavements, walls and street crossings. Citizens out for a stroll pass dozens of little scaffolds cartooned on the sidewalk, with a little figure labeled "speculator" dangling from a white-washed rope. The pedestrians are exhorted to report all offenders to the police, and the police telephone is obligingly written in numerals three feet high.

Just as in Greece, the dollar, pound, and gold coin are the foreigner's only insurance against the low exchange rate. Officially, the dollar is fixed at 50 dinars. This cuts its purchasing power to about one-fourth

of what it deserves in terms of the dinar's real value. American and British personnel here are naturally not enchanted by this deal. Unless they change their money at the black market price, which is hovering around 200 dinars to the dollar, they can't put much aside in postal money orders to be mailed home for the neat postwar nest-egg. Again as in Greece, dollar transactions are banned, but the difference is that the Greek Government blusters and the dollar gets itself merrily sold in Athens, while the Yugoslav authorities are as tough as they sound. Consequently, the Americans are forced to do their business here with nervous characters who talk out of the sides of their mouths, and dollars very often go begging. The discomforts of the official exchange rate have contributed to the sourness of some Americans' views on the Partisan program.

As for the black market in food, the Government's campaign is especially relentless in the meat sector. The peasantry being as stubborn as the regime, very little meat gets sold at all because of the low official prices to producers. So Belgrade—in the center of a livestock area which is making rapid recovery despite the war's ravages—hungers permanently for a square meal. I'll never eat chicken again when I get out of here. Poultry multiplies so prodigiously in Serbia that no ceiling prices are necessary, and fowl flaps at you from every menu. I am now at the stage of experimenting with native dishes in order to get away from the barnyard. *Juvetch* isn't bad: a concoction of rice, potatoes, beans and sundry less identifiable items, all drenched in distilled essence of red pepper, which takes one's mind off food and turns it to drink. The classic *juvetch* bowl of yore had rich morsels of meat; nowadays if your luck is good and the waiter amenable a feeble chunk of it may turn up behind the protective wall of vegetables.

Sugar is also crucially short. What Yugoslavia needs is a good five-cent candy bar, to fill out the hollows in the citizenry. An edible dessert would also serve the nation well. I've encountered only a parched species of cheese strudel, which tastes like the warmed-up pages of a pulp magazine, and watermelon, mountains of watermelon, pale and grayish pink instead of the bright red with which proper watermelon should glow. As if by conspiracy, the sweetness has been left out of the watermelon too.

As a correspondent and a foreigner, I live much better than most people in Yugoslavia except high officials, ranking military and members of the foreign missions. For the average Yugoslav, the most cheerful landmarks in his dull dietetic journey are the occasional packets of U. S. Army rations distributed by UNRRA. One gets a strange,

half-proud, half-uneasy feeling to see the displays of K-rations. Tins of American cheese, jam, pork and eggs, Spam—the stuff we used to groan over and hoot at in every army mess, and here they are in the windows of *Nama*, the State co-operative stores, and the Yugoslavs press their noses against the windows and gaze wistfully at the magnificence from America.

The world crisis in housing rages here too, adding its portion to the dreariness of life in the new Belgrade. Much of the damage from the first Nazi air raiders was repaired during the German occupation, but the wreckage made by the later American bombers still stands. A special branch of the Partisan police keeps busy requisitioning flats, furniture, down to bedding and kitchen pots. The rule of thumb is that nobody is entitled to more than half a room, whatever his legal claim as proprietor or leaseholder. As always, the middle class bears the brunt in this leveling down of life's amenities. The omelets of reform are breaking many bourgeois eggs. H—— and T——, for instance, were upright intellectuals, he a journalist, she a music teacher. They worked hard all their lives, too busy making ends meet to oppress anybody. But the police ticketed them as dubious Partisans, yanked them out of their modest apartment and set them down in a reconverted woodshed in the back yard of a tenement. There they live still, jammed in with their surviving furniture; no plumbing except a tin basin; glazed paper stopping a hole where the window used to be; the roof leaking and the walls cracked.

MARCHING ALONG

Despite the hardships of postwar adjustment, Belgrade zips and sparkles like a football rally, or an American national political party convention in permanent session. The regime has one basic motif: *Smrt fashizmu, sloboda narodu* ("Death to Fascism, Liberty for the People!"). This slogan turns up everywhere: inside and outside the streetcars, at the end of speeches, at the bottom of official documents, on menus, theater programs, rent bills, medical prescriptions. And the word in the regime's vocabulary most often printed, painted and spoken is *zhivio*, the Serb equivalent of the French *vive*, the American "hurrah." Invitations to cry *zhivio* command you from whitewash on the walls, from streamer banners tossing above the streets, from electric signs blinking with red bulbs. It's *Zhivio* Federative Democratic Yugoslavia! *Zhivio* the Army of Federative Yugoslavia! *Zhivio* the Red Army! *Zhivio* the Soviet Union! Most of all, its *Zhivio* Tito!

The Marshal's portrait gazes down from every shop window. One of the two approved photographs is an early likeness made when Tito

was still in the hills, the wartime leader: the face is somber and lean, with hard eyes. The other portrait is more mellow, the face rounder and kinder, the shoulders better padded, the eyes suggesting a twinkle. Nearly always a picture of Stalin, of equal size and matching mood, is mounted alongside.

Belgrade is full of marchers. Platoons of Partisan troops in full kit, new recruits in civilian tatters and patches, double files of school-children down the center of the avenue to and from their classes. Maybe there aren't as many parades as I think, but I get the impression of a large number because the marchers are always singing, and each procession can be heard long before it arrives and long after it has passed from view.

The tunes of Belgrade are catchy Partisan songs, from the defiant years of mountain battle and ambush against the enemy occupiers. They are filled with Tito, the music of the machine gun, the crackle of burning villages, the weeping of widows, the death cry of the fascist invader, the invocation to liberty and rebirth. "*Oj Sloveni*," one favorite goes, "*Yosh shte zhivi*"—Oh Slavs, your ancestral home still stands...."

There is one kind of parade here which does no singing. Work gangs of German war prisoners plod by at every hour. They look fit and fed enough; the Partisans shrewdly estimate that better food will keep production quotas up. But food seems to be all the Germans get. They still wear the uniforms in which they were captured. Hard labor has made them grotesquely ragged, some with little more than a breech-clout and one leg of a trouser to hide their nakedness. They slouch along, faces and bodies burned brown by work in the sun, but eyes lowered and shoulders sagging in defeat. The silence of these processions is like a last stanza in the saga of the master race. One boy in Partisan uniform, with a single rifle, can handle a hundred Germans.

THUNDER IN THE EMBASSY

If relations between Yugoslavia and the U. S. warm up, it won't be the doing of the American Embassy here. I've canvassed the whole staff without finding one member who has a gentle word to say for the Partisans. In view of the State Department's undistinguished record on matters like Greece and Spain, should I evaluate this unanimous thumbs-down on Yugoslavia as really a boost for the regime?

Ambassador Richard Patterson seems to spend less time in Belgrade than in Washington, and that is where he is now. Everybody else in the Embassy, down to the last consular clerk, brims with anecdotes and examples of Partisan iniquity. Of the lot, only one man declined

to render his opinions, preferring ominously to let me find out myself instead of prejudicing me at the start. "That is," he appended with heavy wit, "if a *PM* reporter wants to find out."

Morris Rosenberg, news chief of the OWI bureau, gives me more credit for objectivity, but warns I'll have considerable pain, as *PM*'s correspondent, trying to reconcile what I see the new Yugoslavia is with what *PM* thinks it is. Rosenberg worked with the Partisans before Liberation, at the refugee camps they ran in Italy and Egypt. "They were swell then," he admits, "but now they're in power—and power corrupts." There's no freedom, he alleges. No political opposition is tolerated; quiet, efficient terror settles any debate before it gets started.

Our military attaché, Major Caleb Gates, is a onetime chancellor of the University of Denver; but nothing academic dulls his discourses on the Partisans. He took me out on the terrace of his elegant villa and waved an angry hand at the other elegant villas and mansions dispersed over the wooded slopes of Dedinje, Belgrade's fashionable quarter. "Those damn Partisan gangsters," he shouted. "They've grabbed off the best houses, where the damn magnates and the princes used to live. Don't pay a damn dinar in rent. They got so damn many servants they keep stumbling over 'em, and then they speechify at the people to be patient and make more sacrifices for the Cause." We sipped our highballs meditatively, and the Major went on, more quietly: "You see, I love the Yugoslavs. I think they're the best god-damned people in the world. So it makes me blind mad, the way the fine spirit they showed during the war is being betrayed. Sure, the Partisans put up a good fight, but they've turned into routine Balkan killers, no better than the old dictatorship. Brother, the jails never were as loaded as they are right now, in this bright day of freedom. And when they do let a fellow out of his cell, it's no guarantee he'll ever get home. Maybe you call this a purge of reactionaries. I call it just plain murder."

The littler people at the Embassy don't traffic much in matters of state policy and high crimes. Their complaints against this regime reduce to simpler things like romance. At a bull session with a crowd of enlisted men and junior officers, I collected a whole catalogue of case histories. Practically everybody in the official colony, it seems, has been personally responsible for some young lady's landing in jail and then being released with a warning to keep away from her American. (The British tell me it's the same with them too.)

"We've taken this up many times with the Jugs," I learn at the Em-

bassy. "They try to justify the arrests by arguing that people who hang around the Americans spread propaganda against the Government. Then they say that such people, especially the girls, used to be chummy with the Germans. So of course we ask them why these former friends of the Nazis aren't picked up *before* they try corrupting the Americans. And the answer is: 'Oh, we hoped they would reform.'"

Sometimes this persecution interferes with affairs more permanent than the heartthrobs of lonesome soldiers. I'm told various Yugoslavs visiting at the American and British embassies have been removed from their homes by the secret police. At the moment, the OWI is hammering on official doors pleading for the release of the female owner of a photo shop where their pictures are developed. The authorities claim she's a spy, but they've produced no evidence.

"We had a British Army dispatch rider over at Zemun the other day," said an ATC captain. "The guy cracked up his motorcycle and had a brain concussion. We were going to rush him to our hospital in Bari. Well, for forty-five minutes the poor bastard lay out there in the C-47 under a hot sun while the Jug in charge of the airfield insisted that the plane and the cyclist had to have an official clearance before he'd let them leave the country. I had to promise I would personally allow myself to be locked up if the man recovers and doesn't come back to Yugoslavia. . . ."

UNRRA DEMURS

After all the blasts from the Embassy, it is a pleasure to meet some Americans in Belgrade who approve of Tito. Cocktail party *chez* Ann Rachitch, a Yugo-American member of UNRRA. They were whooping up some Partisan songs, also German, Italian and British International Brigade songs from the Spanish Loyalist campaigns. Bill King of the AP and Stoyan Pribitchevitch of *Fortune* took me. We rattled through the streets in a wheezing *fiacre*, taxicabs being nonexistent. As soon as Bill breathed the magic name *PM* in introducing me, half the party gathered around.

I mentioned my one-way conversations with the Embassy group. The UNRRA people snorted in disgust. Neither the diplomatic nor the military crowd, they said, has an inkling of how bad Yugoslavia was before the Partisans took over and how tough the new problems are. Of course there's a secret police, but it keeps busy with more important matters than arresting floozies. Belgrade is thick with reactionaries. Out in the villages, I would get a fairer picture of Partisan democracy. Not our kind of democracy, with free press and unlimited political activity, but an embryo democracy which is all that the country

can afford right now. A democracy which is implicit in town meetings, eager participation by the peasants in communal discussions, and a vigorous interest of government and people in the public welfare.

The UNRRA folks had as many stories to the good about the Partisans as the other Americans had to the bad. One of the things which impresses UNRRA staffers most as they tour the provinces is the people's voluntary contribution of their labor. The other Sunday an UNRRA man in the Serbian interior found a crew of two hundred cobblers, tailors, metalworkers and mechanics from Belgrade spending their day off fixing things for the peasants.

The Partisans are stressing road and school construction, a domain with which previous governments rarely bothered. According to the UNRRA chaps, the Yugoslav critics of the regime still don't believe such activities important. Instead, the Opposition prefers to bemoan the departed grandeur of dear old Serbia. Some of them want to restore the happy days when the Serbs ruled everybody else in Yugoslavia. Others yearn for a separate Serb state independent of, and antagonistic to, the other members of the Yugoslav community. Some go beyond mere yearning to sabotage. The direct road into Sarajevo is still infested by remnants of Drazha Mihailovitch's Chetniks; even UNRRA traffic must go in armed convoy or make a costly roundabout journey.

As for Partisan treatment of foreigners, I'll cite just one of many stories, told by a young doctor in the U. S. Public Health Service. "We were on an inspection tour," he said, "and we turned up hungry and unannounced for lunch with the *komandant grada* (town commandant) at Podgoritsa. This place was nearly a total wreck because of the war. There were five in our party. We sat down with the Yugoslavs in front of bowls of thin soup that had one floating chunk of fat apiece. We downed this bravely. Then they brought in some fine-looking ham with a lot of eggs. They served us first and invited us to go to it, which we did. While we were shoveling it away, we noticed the Yugoslavs quietly leaving the messhall, one by one. Then we understood—the ham and eggs was something special, dug out of their reserves just for us. Their lunch had ended with the soup. It made us feel kind of silly...."

Dined at the Hotel Majestic with some Information Ministry people and a Russian interpreter from UNRRA. Conversation came around to my pet peeve: the continued exclusion of reporters from Russian-occupied Eastern Europe. The Russian, who is American-educated, said earlier experience in the USSR itself has proved the undesirability of

most foreign correspondents "because they try to satisfy their publishers by straining for unpleasant things to say about the Soviet Union." He suggested the honest newspaperman can be dangerous too. "Take Yugoslavia. Correspondents here usually meet the wrong people. It's nobody's fault. Every revolutionary regime has a crisis of trained personnel. All the ministries are short-staffed. Most of the old bureaucrats are compromised or out of date. Maybe a few know how to adjust their thinking—and they get hopelessly overworked. Meanwhile the new men are busy, learning new jobs. Nobody has time for teas, cocktail parties, sitting around in cafés. Most of them don't speak foreign languages. Born underprivileged in the old regime, they had no chance at a polite education. So whom does the foreign correspondent talk to mostly? The people who have more time for him, naturally. And they're the ones most likely to be enemies of the regime or non-adherents, at least. They have the gift of languages, the comfortable homes, the charming and convenient daughters. That's why we Russians are a little deaf to all the hollering about letting the foreign press into the ex-fascist countries we occupy."

Simitch, who does translating at the Yugoslav Information Ministry, didn't come out as bluntly for barring the foreign press. Not in Yugoslavia anyway, since his government's policy now does permit a few reporters in. But he would like to see the correspondent voluntarily censoring himself. "We might compare the new Yugoslavia," Simitch said, "to a lady in her boudoir. Her hair is up in curlers, she has mud on her face, and her nails need doing. You wouldn't rush upstairs to inspect her, would you? You'd wait till she came down and showed herself *comme il faut*. The good reporter ought to have the same patience with Yugoslavia. We have many problems to solve before we can be judged...."

NO NAILS, NO TYPEWRITERS

General Vladimir Velebit, Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, is my first contact with Partisan officialdom. My appointment was for 6 P.M., but he had to work an hour more before he could receive me. He's only thirty-eight. Speaks good English. Velebit is one of those old-regime products who have succeeded in "adjusting" themselves. His father was a general before him, under the monarchy, but during the delicate diplomatic months of 1943-44, when the Western Allies were making up their minds about Tito, the younger Velebit was a godsend to the Partisans. Wearing a shirt cut from an Allied parachute and trousers salvaged from an old army overcoat, he became speedily popular among the British and American military when he turned up as

chief of a Partisan mission to the Middle East. Later he headed Tito's mission to London, where his sturdy good looks, languages and obvious respectability did much to put the Marshal's point of view across.

When Velebit finally opened the door, he looked like a young man interrupted in the middle of composing a sonnet. His hair was mussed, his eyes shadowed, he wore a frayed sport jacket, no tie, an open shirt. I tried to get him to talk about foreign affairs but he brushed this aside with a few cursory remarks, echoes of the current newspaper editorials about Trieste and the nefarious Greeks. What he wanted to talk about was my work. Was I getting all the information I needed? Had I made the right contacts? I told him he was the first major official to give me an interview. He nodded disconsolately. "I know, that's the trouble with us, we're all too busy."

I said I especially wanted to meet Alexander Rankovitch, chief of the secret police. "Why, I've not seen him for two months," Velebit replied, "and I'm supposed to be a close colleague. You see, I'm really a lawyer, not a diplomat. All this"—sweeping an arm around his helter-skelter office—"is new for me. Things take me twice as long to do as they should, because I'm an apprentice, learning all the time."

Yugoslavia is short in materials as well as in time, Velebit went on. "Why are there so many houses in Belgrade still without windows? We have a big glass factory. We have coal. But we don't have trucks or freightcars to bring the coal to the factory. Yugoslavia has all sorts of crises, but one of the most serious is in materials, from heavy industrial machinery to the common nail. Go down to Bosnia. You'll see the miracles our people are accomplishing. You'll see peasant women pulling ploughs because the oxen have disappeared. All over the country, but particularly where we had to fight the Chetniks as well as the Germans, Italians, Bulgarians and Hungarians, the houses were burned down three, four, five times, and each time the peasants built them up again, but now even the nails are gone. . . ."

The Partisans' lack of equipment and personnel slows everything, including visiting correspondents. There are no automobiles for hire, rent, purchase or even government loan. I must be averaging ten miles daily, trudging from one corner of Belgrade to another, except on lucky days when UNRRA happens to have a jeep idle for an hour. The hikes are multiplied because of the telephone shortage. The Moskva possesses a total of six telephones. Tomashitch has promised me one as soon as a Czech colonel leaves, maybe next week, maybe next month.

Kabilyo, of *Tanyug*, the official Yugoslav news agency, has just lent me his own radio. Until now I've been shut off from news of the world

except for the skimpy, slanted items in the local press. If not for Kabilyo, I'd be waiting permanently for a shipment of radios expected "soon" at the Information Ministry from Zagreb, which the Germans pillaged less efficiently than Belgrade before their evacuation. (The Ministry is short on radios too.)

POMENKA AND THE LOUDSPEAKER

At the Information Ministry, a cramped office building on Kralja Aleksandra, poverty of equipment is complicated by an absolute barrenness of ideas. Nobody on the staff seems to have had any experience likely to be helpful in operating a publicity bureau, let alone a propaganda center for a sovereign state. For instance, the Information Ministry does not possess a list, anywhere in its files, of the members of the Yugoslav Government. It does extraordinary and gracious things like delivering newspapers free of charge to all correspondents and supplying Partisan soldiers as copyboys—but it doesn't know the telephone numbers of government offices or where to find the text of Tito's last speech. About a week from now, the regime begins the trial of twenty-six lieutenants and accomplices of Chetnik leader Drazha Mihailovitch, prime villain in the Partisan calendar. The trial is intended to demonstrate to the world, once and for all, that the Chetniks collaborated with the Axis and that the Partisans alone fought against fascism. The authorities hope that foreign correspondents will report the proceedings copiously. Yet Velko Korach, Vice-Minister of Information, looked blank when I asked if the Government would help by providing English or French translations of the testimony.

However, I have acquired one aid and comfort from the Ministry—a succulent female interpreter named Pomenka. I had asked Korach to recommend somebody who could translate papers for me, lead me around Belgrade by the hand, arrange interviews by telephone, and so on. I explained I preferred to follow the Government's advice on this rather than risk falling in with someone who has an ax to grind against the regime. This pleased Korach so much he presented me with Pomenka, and he refused to consider my offer to pay Pomenka's salary while she works with me.

Pomenka is a bosomy functionary of the Information Ministry. She speaks competent French, is blond and beautiful. My colleagues in the press gang, eyeing her hungrily, have taken to baring their fangs at me lately, a manner of stating that I am a most sly and efficient wolf.

The truth is that Pomenka is too grim and dedicated a Partisan for me even to bleat at her—and howling would be unthinkable. She commenced by announcing she would give me all her time, or as much of

it as I need, because it's her duty, assignment, mission and exclusively for "*la patrie*." Very quickly I perceived that her proficiency in translating newspapers was too high to risk losing by the smallest suggestion of making a pass at a Partisan. Not having discussed this with the other fellows, I've acquired a quiet reputation among them as a fast operator, because any Belgrade girl seen disappearing into a correspondent's hotel room is not considered to be disappearing for the limited purpose of newspaper perusal.

But Pomenka is not the ideal searcher after the unvarnished facts behind the headlines. She automatically rejects the possibility that any representative of the "capitalist" press could want to find and report the truth about Yugoslavia. Her conversation is cluttered with the standard Partisan vocabulary; she uses words like "fascism," "reaction," "people's democracy" to solve every problem and prove every dogma.

So far, Pomenka has balked at only one chore. On August 5th a Congress of the National Liberation Front opens in Belgrade. Trade unions and other groups are electing delegates to the congress. Pomenka excused herself one afternoon to attend elections at her union. I asked her to take me along; I wanted to observe the procedure and watch the new democracy in action. She fidgeted a while and then begged off. No visitors were allowed, she said, and besides it wouldn't be interesting.

There is, however, one form of democratic activity here that I would gladly see restrained. A battery of loudspeakers operates just outside my window in Terazije. These must be the loudest loudspeakers ever made. They begin at six in the morning, usually with a tango amplified to sound like tons of vegetable soup spiced with rocks being poured into ashcans. A Radio Belgrade announcer then gives the four or five people stirring in the square at that hour the news of the previous day. This is so loud and muddled, it would be meaningless even if in English instead of fluid Serb. The voice and the music go on from thirty minutes up to two hours. There are further renditions at irregular intervals throughout the day, and at 6 P.M. the roaring begins with fresh determination for a few more solid hours of pandemonium.

PRESS CONFERENCE

The Government today held a formal press conference, its first since Liberation last October.

The spokesman was Edward Kardelj, dumpy, bank-clerkish, with spectacles and a mild voice—the gray eminence behind Tito. As Minister for the Constituent Assembly, Kardelj is preparing all of Yugo-

slavia's new legislation. He is also the Vice-Premier, the real Minister for Foreign Affairs, and the master theoretician of the Communist Party.

Kardelj said, reading from a prepared statement, that the foreign press and the world wanted to know why Yugoslavia still did not have opposition parties, a free press and a representative parliament. The gist of his reply was that all these will shortly come into existence.

He pointed out the Partisans were finding the recommendations made by the Powers at Yalta easier said than done. The Big Three proposed that the AVNOJ, wartime Partisan National Assembly which is soon to convene here as a Provisional Parliament, be broadened and made more democratic by including acceptable members of prewar Yugoslavia's last elected (1938) *Skupshtina*. It was informally estimated at Yalta that one hundred and twenty such deputies could be found.

No, said Kardelj, there aren't half that number who didn't collaborate with the Axis. "We will restore those 1938 deputies who did not commit treason. For the rest we will rely on nominations by the various democratic groups now functioning. In this manner we will have a genuine broadening of the Provisional Parliament."

The new *Skupshtina* will then have to decide who is entitled to vote and run for office, and how the elections will be held. Basic laws must be adopted for the press, freedom of meeting and assembly, agrarian reform, the courts and other fundamental matters.

"Of course we are making mistakes. We don't conceal them, nor do we allow them to go unpunished. But the elections will prove that the people support our general policy. This election, we guarantee, will be absolutely honest, for the first time in Yugoslav history."

After Kardelj finished reading his prepared text, he asked genially for questions, but showed some irritation when a correspondent asked why the Russian Army still had considerable privileges here even though the British and American military missions, upon request, had already left the country. Did the Soviet secret police have agents in Yugoslavia? Kardelj denied this with a sharp "No!"—which produced smiles on numerous faces around the conference table. (Even in my own hotel there are any number of Russian officers who've been guests for months—and many of them wear the badge of the NKVD—so why deny it?)

What about the oldtime political parties which didn't join the Liberation Front? Have any of them asked permission to resume activity? Which of them can be considered democratic? Kardelj: "No party has asked permission. None will ask, because no permission is required.

Many groups have already begun to work, and others will soon. They will have freedom of organization and press. Newsprint will be distributed equally to all party organs."

"But why is it," asked Hubert Harrison, of Reuters, "that Milan Grol's Democratic Party, which is a little critical of present developments, has been unable to get newsprint, while the Front has at least one hundred newspapers?"

"It is impossible to establish absolute democratic justice overnight," Kardelj replied impatiently. "I've already told you, we are working on laws which will eliminate this."

A final question, about Vlatko Matchek, made the Vice-Premier visibly uneasy. Matchek, the perennial leader of the Croat peasants, is said to have stood by without resisting the German invasion or the later quisling Government. The Partisan press has been assailing him lately as a "fascist collaborator." (He's in Paris now, a voluntary exile.) Kardelj began by admitting the term "fascist" was perhaps being used too loosely. Matchek's case ought to be settled in the People's Court. Yes, it was up to the court to decide. But, said Kardelj, warming up, "it was not only the quislings who were traitors. The appeasers also betrayed their country. Matchek"—his voice rising—"was an appeaser..."

Too bad Kardelj had to break out like that, assigning Matchek to the courts and then condemning him beforehand. Throughout the question period, in fact, Kardelj's manner was a shade too dogmatic to impress some of the correspondents favorably, as I found out later—and a good press is something this much-abused regime badly needs.

Personalities apart, I was troubled by Kardelj's constant assumption that the "people" are behind him and his colleagues. How can he be so sure, without a plebiscite? At one point he said significantly that freedom of speech and press will exist "as long as such freedom does not take anti-democratic forms." But who is to decide just what "anti-democratic" is? Kardelj didn't say.

Still, it seems to me that all an outsider can reasonably demand is good faith from the writers of the new laws. So far as I can see, this regime, while it may have an excess of zeal, does mean well. If the elections are free, then Yugoslavia will be free.

TRIAL OF THE CHETNIKS

The Chetnik trial is now about half over. Technically, twenty-six aides of General Drazha Mihailovitch sit in the dock, but the real accused is Drazha himself. He has been variously reported in Italy or

somewhere in Yugoslavia—and therefore still dangerous. Prosecution and defendants mention him with every second breath. His is easily the most hated name in Partisan Yugoslavia. I think the regime considers even Hitler a lesser monster than this once obscure Serb officer who wrote the top of a fine new page in Yugoslav history by rallying the resistance but who then evidently went bad. Enough has already been said in the prisoners' dock to wash away the whole Mihailovitch monument.

Apologists have argued that Drazha never collaborated with the Germans against the Partisans. They say Chetnik arrangements with the Occupiers were made only by undisciplined minor commanders. But this trial has produced hours of testimony that Drazha believed the Partisans more dangerous than the Germans.

Unlike the Moscow Trials, there is no orgy of confessional at this Belgrade Trial. Defendants—the Vice-President, Secretary and seven other members of the Chetnik Central National Committee, four Chetnik commanders, and thirteen assorted spies and terrorists—are not beating their breasts and proclaiming their sins in the manner made familiar by Moscow. They prefer to blame their fellow prisoners or other colleagues still uncaught, especially Mihailovitch. I see no evidence that they have been beaten, drugged or hypnotized. They all seem to be in good health, washed, well-fed and properly dressed.

If I were straining to be critical, I'd protest only against their being bullied by the Court, which assumes a prisoner is guilty until he proves he's innocent. For anyone born, like myself, to the reverse tradition, it is revolting to hear the chief magistrate, when men are on trial for their lives, throw loaded questions at them and repeatedly revile them as guilty before the verdict is rendered.

Apart from this, the prisoners are getting ample chance to tell their story, which Pomenka is tirelessly translating into my ear. Since most of them are freely admitting Mihailovitch's guilt (if not their own), and since the chief judge jogs their memory with frequent denunciations, the proceedings make fine propaganda for the Partisans. Everything is being broadcast from the courtroom to the entire nation, and even abroad. Terazije Square is jammed with listeners unable to get into the Law School, where the trial is being held in the main amphitheatre.

At the opening session, when the prisoners filed in to take their seats like star students in the first two rows of the lecture hall, the audience behind them roared with fury. Many of the spectators were black-weeded widows and orphans of Partisans and innocents whom the defendants are charged with slaughtering. "*Na smrt!*" ("Death!"), the crowd bellowed down into the well of the amphitheatre. "Death

for the cutthroats! To the scaffold! Down with the German hirelings! An eye for an eye!" Applause for the Prosecutor. Wild cheers for the panel of judges, who are five army officers. Only the Inquisitorial robes were lacking to make the scene auto-da-fé. But the atmosphere of a court-martial was promptly established by the President of the Court, Colonel Mihailo Georgevitch. He made a stern little speech against further blemishes on the processes of democratic Yugoslav justice, and the mob subsided into an orderly assembly.

No rebuke, however, can dispel the hate which radiates toward the prisoners from magistrates and spectators. The defendants must feel it clutching at their throats as they speak. Only one of them, Major Dragutin Keserovitch, has found enough spirit to return glare for glare with the audience, though even he, in his exchanges with the judges, shows unflagging humility. For this Chetnik commander it is safe to predict the Court will find no mercy. Keserovitch, reputedly an ex-tailor, stands out for the bloodiness of the indictments against him. A high (or low) point in the proceedings came when the President somberly read a list of 450 persons—including women, children and priests—allegedly liquidated by Keserovitch. It was brought out that several of the women had been murdered merely because they wore red kerchiefs or red sweaters. At this, old Mustapha Mulalitch, one of the nonmilitary leaders on the political side of the Chetnik movement, suddenly burst into tears and moaned from his place among the other prisoners: "At last I see in what kind of company I was. If I had a revolver now, I would shoot myself."

To believe the defendants, it seems they all condemned the arrangements with the Axis, but when they protested to Mihailovitch he offered the stock explanation that the time was not ripe and that he would mount an attack as soon as the Allies gave the signal. This thesis has been advanced with particular vigor by Major Vojislav Lukatchevitch (a top-flight Chetnik commander in the Sanjak, Montenegro, and Herzegovina), one of the few prisoners whose dignity matches his rank.

"We meant to fight the invader," Lukatchevitch told the Court, "but we were led systematically, step by step, into the mire of treason. Some sank into it up to their necks, others over their heads... I demanded of General Mihailovitch that our line should be clearly defined, that we should be told what we were, where we stood, and what we were fighting for. I only was told that we would begin when matters were arranged. But nothing happened. Who could have known that all this was a trick to pacify some of us! Drazha succeeded in leading us artfully by the nose..."

EXIT THE CENSOR

This month, August of 1945, promises to be the most constructive period since Liberation. Belgrade hums with an awareness of impending action. The capital is filled with delegates. For the first time, the regional National Liberation Fronts are sitting down to a *federal* congress in one supernational United Front of all the states and territories in Yugoslavia; and for the first time the Anti-fascist Council, which was only a revolutionary junta during the Occupation, will convene as a Provisional Parliament.

Already the regime this week has twice demonstrated it is beginning to relax and grow mellow. Both actions are in the direction of liberty, not an overcrowded highway in this Balkan corner of the world.

Tito, first of all, has put through a general amnesty and reprieve. These wipe out the sins of the small-bore collaborationists convicted, arrested or under threat of arrest because of anti-Partisan activity during the Occupation. The writ carefully excludes "persons who fled abroad to evade our authority." This keeps the accounts open with the émigrés in London. Also barred are volunteers in the Croat terrorist *Ustacha*, the quisling Liotitch police, the anti-Stalinist Russian Free Corps, the German-minority *Kulturbund*, the Gestapo and all its "denouncers and agents," as well as conscripts in these organizations if they committed murder, arson, looting or rape.

Otherwise the pardon is refreshingly broad. Political prisoners are forgiven a substantial fraction of their jail sentences. Members of political parties which neglected to support Tito are amnestied, also deserters, and even "libelers of our Army and of the representatives of the People's Authority." In general, old grudges are canceled against all who worked or fought for the enemy because of compulsion or confusion.

Jail doors, as a result, are swinging wide open. From the Kragujevats internment camp alone, 600 have just been released. The biggest reprieve, really, is for the tens of thousands of dubious characters who have been living under threat of arrest by OZNA (*Odeljenje za Zastitu Naroda* or "Section for the Protection of the People"), which is the secret political police.

All this is clearly part of a vigorous campaign to reassure foreign critics and internal grumblers. Says *Borba*, the Communist journal: "Once again we have evidence that the new Yugoslavia is a brotherly community, a country of freedom and democracy, in which law, justice and magnanimity reign."

One point has not yet been clarified: the extent to which the amnesty will restore the *political* rights of the reprieved. Judging from the hallelujahs in the press, however, it seems reasonable to assume that those who have been excused their mistakes will be fully reinstated and given equal franchise with all other citizens to vote in the elections.

Another blow in an excellent cause this week is the sudden and total abolition of censorship over foreign correspondents. Yugoslavia becomes the *only* country in southeastern Europe where the reporter from now on is restrained in his labors by nothing except his own discretion.

This shelving of the blue pencil and scissors is certainly an impressive credit to the Partisan account. It is an especially grand gesture because of the absurd importance the Partisans used to place on censorship, at the frequent cost of common sense and minimum good relations with the press. I understand that when correspondents first came here after Liberation all their dispatches were held while the regime looked for a suitable censor. He had to have two qualifications: a working knowledge of English *and* proof of three years' membership in the Partisan movement. I don't know whether such a citizen was ever found. At any rate, young Tasa Mladenovitch, the censor since my arrival, knew no English at all and depended upon a translator, Jura Nintchitch, another young Partisan veteran.

I was having the usual wrangle with the censor when suddenly he was abolished. The argument this time was over a yarn already twenty-four hours delayed, that the Yugoslav Government has summoned the British and American Air Transport Commands here to withdraw their operational personnel from Belgrade. The Yugoslavs contend that their own ground crews are now quite capable of operating Zemun Airport and servicing Allied planes landing there. The only hitch is that our people don't think so, and are not willing to risk the lives of crew and passengers by relying on Yugoslavs untrained in meteorological and radio equipment. The situation is stalemated.

A half-dozen telephone calls to Mladenovitch's office brought the same reply: he was still trying to contact an unidentified "higher authority" for verification of my facts. Mladenovitch wasn't really interested in verifying the facts, which he knew were correct. He was aiming to get me weary enough to give up the whole idea of sending any story at all. He tipped his hand at one point by saying gloomily that, in his "private opinion," my cable would not help Yugoslav-American relations. To which the only possible reply was that my job

in Yugoslavia was to report everything likely to inform American public opinion about Yugoslavia.

In the middle of these debates, I received a phone call from the American Embassy reporting that the Yugoslavs had abolished censorship beginning right now.

Naturally, I didn't believe this preposterous rumor. Not until I had rushed to the wireless station with an uncensored carbon of my story and stood as in a delicious dream watching a British sergeant tap out my story in Morse to Rome for relay home. And so Mladenovitch goes out, taking with him the impossible assignment of editing Yugoslavia into a Utopia.

UNITED FRONT

A giant portrait of Tito in uniform, flanked by two Yugoslav flags, dominates the auditorium at the Kolorats University. Above the proscenium arch a streamer banner stretching the width of the hall proclaims *Zhivio I Kongres [NOF]* ("Hurrah for the first Congress of the United National Liberation Front of Yugoslavia"). Delegates, some of them teen-agers, overflow from the main floor into the aisles and up the galleries. Women members from Bosnia wear the black Turkish headkerchief. A Macedonian *hodzha* with white turban wrapped around his bright red fez makes the solitary fleck of color in this otherwise drab but wildly enthusiastic assemblage.

One may be pardoned a shade of uneasiness over the exact fidelity with which these delegates represent the Yugoslav people. They've been sent here by the federal government, state governments, trade unions, Anti-fascist Women's Front, United League of Anti-fascist Youth and sundry other groups. I can't say how all these operate, but I did attend one organizational election of Congress delegates in Belgrade. What I saw was a little remote from model democracy. They shut the doors tight at 10 A.M., and nominating began immediately. A small clique down front seemed to have the situation taped from the start. Its members vigorously nominated one another. A single objection could disqualify any candidate, so when anybody from the back of the room proposed a name, someone in the clique denounced the nominee as a collaborator or black marketeer, and that was that. Nobody tried to object to the down-front nominees. There was no vote; when the required eight names had been advanced, the chairman simply asked and obtained a shout of assent for the whole list. The elections were finished in 11 minutes.

Tito's election to the presidency of the Front on the third day of the Congress was no surprise. The day before, appearing after a tumultuous

demand by the delegates to see him, he had told the Congress he didn't want to say much at this time because he would be delivering the presidential address later. Nor was the steamroller unanimity which greeted every speech and motion very reassuring, or the mechanical "Tee-Toh, Tee-Toh, Tee-Toh" breaking from 1,100 throats at stated intervals with the tomtom rhythm and ugly souvenir of *Sieg Heil! Sieg Heil!* and that other mechanical unanimity once fashionable at Nuremberg. However, it has been suggested to me that the finale of any presidential nominating convention in the U. S. also manages to achieve a fine frenzied agreement over the infallibility and greatness of candidate and party, so maybe I shouldn't begrudge the Yugoslavs their own peculiar democratic machinery.

Like the American Democratic and Republican parties too, the Partisans claim "The Peepul" for their very own. (There is the slight difference that the American parties can always point to some past election, whereas the Partisans haven't gotten around to that yet—but that will come.) At any rate, every speech is filled with the *mystique* of the Front. "The Front," said Kardelj, "expressed the strivings of the basic people's masses. . . . A movement of the people, it grew spontaneously and consciously out of its depths. . . ." "The Front," said Stankovitch, President of the Serb National Assembly, "was created from below, from the dark depths of the widest people's masses. . . ." "The program of the Front," said Tito, "has long existed in the hearts and minds of the people's masses. . . ."

Certainly the Charter which the Congress has unanimously voted as the program of the Front has little in it to quarrel with. It pledges liberty of conscience, religion, assembly and press, secret elections and a free vote—a guarantee weakened only by the rider, characteristic of a land where democracy is a new and fledgling science, that "the enemies of democracy should be deprived of democratic rights." Universal education, medical care, old-age insurance, security from unemployment, and a nationwide construction plan of rest camps, children's asylums, hospitals and sanatoriums are envisaged. The Charter consecrates Yugoslavia to "brotherhood" with the USSR and "a deepening of friendly relations" with Britain, the United States and France. It plunks resolutely for the unity and equality of all peoples inside the Yugoslav Federation and for the solidarity of all the Balkan nations—no small ambition in a country whose entire history as a State has been wracked by hatred among nationalities and creeds within and beyond its borders.

The big newsbreak in the Charter is tucked away on an inside page, which quietly reveals that the Front will henceforth campaign openly for abolition of the monarchy. Article XI says:

"The Front considers the unity of our peoples, the federative arrangement of the State, and true democracy, as being irreconcilable with a monarchic form of rule, and it will exert itself so that the people, at the free elections for the Constituent Assembly, shall vote for a republican form of rule as the only form which corresponds to the interests of all our peoples."

This seems to commit mayhem on the existing agreement between Tito and Ivan Subasitch, who used to be Premier of the Royal Yugoslav Government in London. With Churchill's support, Subasitch merged his regime with the Partisans' in 1944 on condition that the monarchy question be put away for a Constituent Assembly to decide. Tito admitted as much today in his speech to the Front, when he fired the first direct shot in the campaign against young Peter's throne. In effect, he said we made an agreement, but we know that the Karageorgevitch dynasty's return would be a disaster, so we must do our duty as good Yugoslavs and start fighting for a republic right now.

Ethically, this smells like a high violation of a sacred contract. Tito justifies it by arguing that the people don't want monarchy. The question arises: how does he know they don't? The proof will lie in the election, provided the vote is really free. Everything depends on that. And the freedom of the vote, in turn, will depend on how much flexibility the parties inside the Front and *outside* of it will be allowed.

This Front is too elusive a concept for me to evaluate. Instinctively, the notion of everybody voluntarily agreeing with everybody else makes me uncomfortable. It doesn't jibe with the mathematical probabilities. On the other hand, I have to ask myself if gay and carefree disagreement is necessarily a good thing in a country with Yugoslavia's problems. After all, there used to be seventeen different parties in Slovenia alone, which is just one small segment of Yugoslavia. Furthermore, the Front made real contributions during the crisis of war. These contributions ought to be sufficient reason to give the Partisans the benefit of the doubt now.

ACADEMY OF TERROR

Last week the first mass trial of Yugoslav war criminals ended with seven death sentences. Condemned to die were three of Mihailovitch's commanders—Keserovitch, Lukatchevitch and Vojinovitch—for collaborating with the Axis and murdering Partisans; Jovan Girkovitch, a former captain in the Royal Yugoslav Army, for sabotaging mobiliza-

tion while serving in the War Ministry after Belgrade's liberation; a Gestapoman and two small-fry agents for membership in a spy-terrorist ring they admitted had been set up by Mihailovitch.

Jurovitch, secretary of the Central National Committee, which was Mihailovitch's counterweight to Tito's Anti-fascist Council, got twenty years for sending out phony communiqués to persuade the world that the Chetniks were fighting the Italians and Germans instead of collaborating with them. The other eighteen, including eight members of the Central Committee and two women, received jail sentences ranging from one to fifteen years.

Keserovitch was the star of the show, in terms of testified villainy. During the trial, petitions kept pouring in from districts where Keserovitch had operated, urging that he be transferred for his execution to this or that scene of his crimes. Witness after witness told how Keserovitch's victims were butchered after drunken orgies and how he left the bodies unburied, for the dogs to eat. One villager related that his eighteen-year-old brother, who had lain for eight years in a plaster cast because of a backbone injury, was carried by Chetnik raiders to Keserovitch for judgment. The Major ordered him skinned alive. Said the witness:

"My mother pleaded: 'Don't kill him.' The commander replied: 'Pardon me, Madame, I don't kill, I slaughter!' My mother then said: 'You can't rule this country without people. You can't kill everybody.' But Keserovitch answered: 'I'll kill a thousand, a hundred thousand, I'll kill a million, I'll kill everybody, I'll leave only one, but he will be a true Serb!'"

The trial continued its main objective of shattering the Mihailovitch legend beyond resuscitation. From the assertions of various defendants, it developed that their former chief had actually negotiated with the Germans for incorporation of Herzegovina into Serbia after the final German victory which he would aid. As for the Italians, Todor Petrovitch, Chetnik political agent, told how "we received our supplies exclusively from the Italians in the early days—food, arms, ammunition, weapons, money." He recalled one order issued by Mihailovitch when the latter assumed direct command of Bosnian operations against the Partisans near Kalinovik. "If you cannot hold your positions in collaboration with 22," the order read, "get help from 11." Petrovitch explained to the Court: "'22' was our code number for the Italians, '11' for the Germans."

The most sensational disclosure in this second half of the trial was a plan by Mihailovitch to provoke a conflict between the Soviets and the Western Allies after Belgrade's liberation. For this purpose, it was

testified, he arranged for the training of a Chetnik sabotage group, during the Spring of 1945, at a Nazi terrorist school in Vienna.

"The uniforms and equipment we received," said Branko Gashparovitch, a self-confessed graduate of this academy, "were British and had British labels, to create the impression that our activity was supported by the British, which would provoke trouble with the Russians."

The chief judge asked him: "When you discussed plans with Mihailovitch for sabotage after Belgrade's liberation but while the war was still going on, did he reckon on a conflict between Britain and the Soviet Union in order to extricate himself from his difficult situation?"

"He did," the prisoner replied. . . .

FIRING SQUAD

All the death sentences were appealed to the Praesidium of Parliament. Nothing having appeared in the press pro or con about the appeal for nearly a week, I decided yesterday to try to talk to the chief judge. This was regarded by my Yugoslav friends as a project hopeless beyond measure. So it was a minor scoop and sheerly astonishing when Colonel Georgevitch, on the telephone, agreed cordially to an interview and fixed an appointment for this morning.

The place was an army barracks, in a small second-floor assembly room where, judging from the long desk and pulpit-like rostrums on the platform, courts-martial sit for less publicized trials. Colonel Georgevitch, a blond and handsome soldier looking less than his thirty-five years, was attended by one of his four assistant judges, forty-year-old Major Nikola Stankovitch, who looked as sinister as his chief looked cherubic. The Major wore no tie, needed a shave, a haircut, and apparently a bath. He also lacked one eye.

Both judges were equally amiable in their welcome. Since I had asked for an interview with them, they assumed they were what I was interested in, and fell to talking about themselves, also asking how long before my story on them would be published and where. When I took a long-shot chance and inquired if this was where the condemned Chetniks were kept, they impatiently said yes and went on with their personal histories. The story finished, the judges glanced at watches and began making motions of departure.

But the Chetnik prisoners, I said all in a rush, if they were jailed in this building, could I not be permitted to speak with one or two of them—how were they behaving—what was the status of their appeal—would the judges comment on the case?

An embarrassing pause. The two shuffled their feet and briefcases. Finally the Colonel said: "But the Chetniks are no longer here."

"Would it be possible for me to be taken to their present jail, then?"

The Colonel did not reply.

"If I write anything, I will first submit it to you for approval," I offered.

"There is nothing to be written," said the Colonel. Another pause. Then, almost shyly, he added: "You see, they're dead. . . ."

The seven had been executed at 7 A.M. yesterday, in an open field outside Belgrade, after rejection of their appeals. The executions were not secret. Some passers-by watched the firing squad at work.

"They did not conduct themselves well," said the one-eyed Major. "They kept asking the prison commandant if their pardons had arrived. Even in front of the firing squad they pleaded for mercy. The Partisans know better how to die. Our martyrs used to taunt the executioners, telling them their murder would be avenged by the people. . . ."

PARTISAN PARLIAMENT

The Partisans' revolutionary council has now installed itself in the elegant hemicycle of the *Skupshтина*, that formidable relic of the ancient regime with spacious, leather-cushioned oak chairs, colonnaded galleries, and odors of the Karageorgevitch dynasty.

There is a certain sardonic fitness in one of the first acts of this new People's Assembly ensconced amid royal momentos. King Peter in London having dismissed the regency and denounced Tito for the Marshal's recent blast to the Congress of the Front, the *Skupshтина* has retorted by reinstating the regency and ignoring the King's decree. Peter had contended that Tito's speech broke the covenant made last year to preserve neutrality on the monarchy question and let the crown be represented by a regency of three commoners until the Constituent Assembly could meet to decide on the form of Yugoslavia's regime. *Tanyug*, the official news agency, cunningly announced that Tito had spoken to the Front, not to the Parliament, and as a political leader, not as Premier; therefore he, Tito, had by no means violated the covenant. Vice-Premier Kardelj then arose to inform the Parliament that it was the King who had violated the covenant by withdrawing the regency before election of the Constituent Assembly. Hence, Kardelj reasoned, the regency was still intact. The Parliament breezily voted to forget about Peter's declaration.

This smooth operation has definitely not improved the young monarch's chances of again wearing his crown in Belgrade. The exchange of compliments has encouraged a wide-open campaign against the King in the Government press. The high point thus far has been a

speech by Blagoje Neshkovitch, Serbian Premier, predicting confidently that the King will some day return, but "as a traitor on whom the people will inflict a well-deserved punishment."

Meanwhile the regime has made progress toward self-democratization. Parliament has been enlarged along the lines proposed by Yalta, except that the selection of new members has not been limited, as the Big Three limited it, to the roster of the last Parliament elected in 1938. Only 36 deputies from that dubious chamber were found eligible; the rest were said to have disqualified themselves as pre-war reactionaries or wartime collaborationists. To fill up the seats in the new 1945 *Skupshchina*, the regime has selected 13 independents and 70 others nominated by various parties inside or on the fringes of the Front. Of course, the total of new members comes only to 119, which will be dwarfed by some 300 holdovers from the Partisan AVNOJ. But the important thing to remember is that the new arrivals are *not* Communists, so far as the naked eye can detect, and that the Communists, who are certainly powerful in the Front, did not object to this. The enlarged *Skupshchina* is not a satisfactory reflection of the Yugoslav people. Only a fair election could achieve that. But the Parliament now is at least a shade less monopolized by the Communists, which is all that could be hoped for during this interim emergency period before Yugoslavia writes herself a new Constitution.

A basic law for the election has already been passed by the full Parliament, and special committees are working full-speed to prepare other fundamental legislation for parliamentary approval.

The election law restores the secret ballot, which was suppressed by King Alexander's dictatorship. For the first time in Yugoslav history, women will have the right to vote. Soldiers are also given the ballot, and the voting age is reduced from 21 to 18. Characteristically, all Partisan veterans may vote even if they are less than 18, on the theory that any patriot old enough to fight for his country is old enough to share in the making of its future. Conversely, all ministers in the Governments which served the dictatorship between 1929 and 1939 are stripped of their suffrage, along with higher officials of the quisling regime and Occupation agencies as well as active fighters against the resistance movement.

The last restriction has provoked some alarm among the moderates, who are worried about its lack of precise definition and foresee that it may be used to disfranchise persons on vague, unproved charges of collaborationism. The election bill was passed unanimously, but a few deputies abstained—how many I can't say, because there was no recorded vote. Milan Grol, head of the Democratic Party, which had a

good anti-dictatorship record under the old regime, simply got up and announced his group could not give its support to the bill. He explained that it took rights away from certain people before having guaranteed the rights of all citizens. He said the bill ought to have been preceded by another and broader law laying down these rights. "One should not start with the exceptions but conclude with them," he said.

In carefully vague language, Grol told the *Skupshtina*: "There must be unconditional good will if a basis for understanding is to be found. We are convinced this cannot be found unless there is an understanding with the progressive groups." By this he meant that the new laws should be written to satisfy liberals also, and not just the radical left. The *Skupshtina* understood what he was driving at. The members yelled "Quibbler!" and heckled him and finally shouted him down.

Certainly the Partisans could profit by development of their democratic instincts. The performance against Grol was hardly fair parliamentary procedure. Also, the election law is a little unclear, really. But the good parts of it outweigh the bad. The same may be said for other pending legislation, of which I've been picking up unofficial summaries. These projects include guarantees of free press and free speech, creation of a two-chamber Parliament modeled after the American system, abolition of all privileges and discriminations based on race, religion, sex or inherited social status. This regime is working hard and achieving much. I think it's fair to hope that the present sins of illiberalism are due to excess energy and impatience, and that they will decline as the regime matures.

My dispatches home have been written in a tone of pretty warm approval. Soon after the amnesty, abolition of censorship and opening of Parliament, I started a cable to *The Nation* this way: *The men who created Partisan Yugoslavia are engaged in their most constructive work since Belgrade's liberation. . . .* Yesterday, to PM, I led off with: *Yugoslavia is celebrating the war's end by speedy action to translate the victory of the democracies on the battlefield into solid economic and political benefits for the masses. . . .*

Between yesterday and tonight I've had time for further meditation, and so I am inserting the following dark thoughts into a round-up of the Belgrade week's doings which the *New Statesman* and *Nation* in London has asked me to cable:

At the core of all the declarations, resolutions and laws now being made in this capital is the word 'democratic.' Candor compels me to note that the Yugoslav definition fails to match any of the meanings of this word in the

semantics of Western liberalism. The democracy which the Tito regime is instituting has, even in theory, an intolerance and exclusiveness which limit its application to the chosen. And in practice Partisan Yugoslavia, at least up till now, has been ruled with a severity and arbitrariness little consonant with civil liberty and government by consultation with the majority. But candor also compels me to point out that the Yugoslav tradition of dictatorship and of politics by violence makes any democratic innovation here a slow and courageous thing. Considering their prewar and Occupation grievances, and their instinctive need for strong defenses against ever-possible reaction, the Partisans are being perhaps as liberal as they dare. . . .

4

Belgrade Notebook: Departure

My notes remind me that I distrusted the numerous stories I heard, soon after reaching Belgrade, of Partisans badgering citizens who show friendly interest in us or the British. A very great unpleasantness has just been uncovered beneath my own nose, and I shall have to re-examine my early skepticism.

The trouble began when two young Serbs recently decided on a small gesture of Yugoslav-American good will. President Truman having set aside a day to honor the U.S. Army Air Forces, the boys thought it would be an agreeable thing to celebrate the day in Belgrade also. They applied to the local OWI, where they obtained material from which they composed two amiable speeches about the AAF. They also received a print of the Air Forces documentary film "Memphis Belle," and hired or borrowed a hall.

On the appointed day a fair-sized audience, including several Yugoslav officers in uniform, found the hall decorated tastefully with Yugoslav and American flags. "Memphis Belle" was run off. The boys delivered their speeches (one speech quoted liberally from a prize-winning essay by a G.I. on the democratic war aims of the American soldier, and both speeches had been previously passed by the internal Yugoslav censorship). A young lady sang several Yugoslav songs and *The Star Spangled Banner*. There was much applause and good feeling as the spectators left.

That same night, at 2 A.M., the Secret Police called on the two young men, plucked them from their beds, and took them away.

R—— phoned me at 10 to tell me this. At 11 A.M. I visited my friend Vasilije Perendija, assistant to the Assistant Minister of Information. I gave him the details. I told him I didn't believe the story; but I asked urgently that if the boys were really arrested I should be allowed to see them or the OZNA official who had ordered the arrest. Perendija said he would check at once, and advise me before 3 P.M.

At 3:30 P.M. I rang Perendija up. His voice indicated some distress. He had been trying to find the OZNA man involved, and would I

wait until 4, when he would surely have news? At 4:30 the silence was unbroken, so I phoned again. Perendija said OZNA was still unreachable. I said I might call OZNA headquarters myself, if Perendija would give me the number and a name to ask for. Perendija was reluctant. I insisted. He revealed that the name was Sardelitch, but he balked at giving the number. After much talk, he finally yielded. I scribbled the number and dialed it. Busy signal. Ten minutes later I tried again. The voice which answered sounded like Perendija's. It was. He had given me an alternate number for the Information Ministry!

Before I could find adequate phrases to comment on such monkey-shines, Perendija asked me to come right over to the Ministry. His chief, Assistant Minister Korach, now had some news for me.

Korach, who is the Yugoslav Government's official liaison with the foreign press, is a sandy-haired, mustached fellow, about thirty-five, who learned about public relations as a reporter for an obscure weekly in prewar Zagreb. During the Occupation he was political commissar with a small Partisan brigade in Montenegro. He speaks little German, less French, and no English. He cultivates the grand manner, however, and can say "No" in every modern language, very adroitly and with much grace, so that it is almost as comforting as "Yes."

I was received with the usual affability—a shopkeeperly rubbing of the hands, offer of a chair and a cigarette, polite query about my health and work.

"I am having a little difficulty with this OZNA matter," said I.

"OZNA? But what is there about OZNA which should make difficulty for you?"

"There really shouldn't be any. That is the point. All I am trying to do is disprove this rumor that two young men have been arrested for making pro-American speeches."

Korach's small eyes became larger. "Where could such nonsense have come from? I know nothing about it. Come now"—in a gently chiding tone—"you should investigate your sources."

"That, Mr. Korach, is what I wish to do. I was told to come here because you had information for me. I shall be very grateful for your help."

"Information? I do not have any. What exactly would you like me to tell you?"

Were we going to start from the beginning again? I said: "I've been discussing it with Mr. Perendija all day."

"Mr. Perendija is Mr. Perendija," Korach said orientally, and peered down at his navel.

"He is your assistant," I said. "All day he has been looking for a Mr. Sardelitch. Mr. Perendija has just told me you can give me some facts about the arrest."

"I talked with Mr. Sardelitch at noon," Korach replied abruptly. "He promised me he would have all the details by tomorrow at 3 P.M."

I restrained the impulse to inquire why Perendija had not told me this, or whether Perendija had even known about it, and why Sardelitch needed a full day to get the facts about an arrest which he himself had made. "May I come to see you at 3:30, then? Please excuse me, but it would be useful for everybody if I could clear this matter up quickly, before incorrect reports get published."

Korach permitted a frown to disturb his blandness, but only for an instant. "Don't trouble yourself, my dear friend. I will telephone you."

The next day, no phone call having come from the Ministry, I presented myself at 5 P.M. in Korach's antechamber. The Assistant Minister received me immediately.

The atmosphere was a tint less cordial. Korach said he regretted he had not yet heard from OZNA. But why was I so interested in minor police matters? Why didn't I concern myself with the much more important news about Yugoslav reconstruction instead of wasting time on café gossip?

I said I was fascinated by Yugoslav reconstruction and was studying it assiduously. But the Minister should please remember that I was an American correspondent, and therefore legitimately concerned about reports of Yugoslavs being arrested for pro-American opinions.

"Reports which you gathered from some bourgeois whore," Korach snapped. Before I could reply he got up and said: "I must say I am shocked to see a *PM* correspondent depending on such sources. You are like all the others." He began pacing up and down the room. "Belgrade is full of material about the wonderful work we Partisans are doing. And *PM* thinks it better to ignore this and hunt for sensations."

"My 'bourgeois whore,' Mr. Minister, wears pants and is highly respectable," I said. "If you will give yourself the trouble to consult your file of my dispatches, you will see I have spent much time reporting the constructive work of this regime, and favorably. But I am also trying to run down the report of this arrest. If the report is false, I mean if the reported reasons for the arrest are a malicious invention, you should be very eager to help me disprove them. The tactics of your Ministry to date have not been reassuring. As for *PM*, you misunderstand the liberal American press entirely if you think I am going

to shut my eyes to the truth because the truth doesn't square with my friendly attitude toward this Government. *PM*—"

"You have a peculiar idea of a friendly attitude, my dear sir," Korach broke in. "Is it friendly for a foreigner to pry into official business of the Yugoslav Government?"

"I beg your pardon, but I am not merely a 'foreigner.' I'm a foreign correspondent. It's my duty as a correspondent to study all matters of public interest. When I came to Belgrade, you told me that the Partisan Government had nothing to conceal from the foreign press. Your Ministry has graciously offered its services to me on previous occasions. Since I am still very eager to refute the charges against OZNA, would you please arrange that I interview a person in authority there?"

"I regret, but officials of OZNA are not available for interview."

"You mean that the Ministry of Information refuses to help me secure an interview with OZNA?"

"I mean that the Ministry would refuse, even if it could. But I tell you OZNA does not permit itself to be interviewed. Don't let that trouble you"—sneeringly. "Go ahead and send your story. Fill it with the reactionary lies you have collected. We are used to it." Then, feeling he had gone too far, Korach turned mild. "But if you will be patient . . . I am in touch with the police . . . As soon as I have something, I will let you know."

Korach was right. I tracked down the OZNA telephone number—281111. After four calls, it was evident that Mr. Sardelitch was permanently "engaged" and that nobody knew anything about the case. I went to OZNA headquarters, a gloomy pile at *Toplitchin Venats*.

The officer-of-the-day inspected me as if I were a reptilian curiosity when the guard called him out to the street. If I did not have a pass signed by Mr. Sardelitch, he said, it would be impossible to see Mr. Sardelitch. And how would one go about securing such a pass? By phoning Mr. Sardelitch. . . .

I shall never meet this Mr. Sardelitch, or even be entirely sure he exists. On the third day, Korach phoned me triumphantly to announce that the youths had been arrested because of "numerous previous reports that they used to be connected with the Chetniks."

"But I thought the minor Chetniks were included in the general amnesty," I said. "These boys are just kids. Are they so dangerous?"

"Yes," said Korach, softly. I could hear him grinning. "Very dangerous."

"Then why were they allowed to walk around free until the night they made their pro-American speeches?"

Silence.

"Well," I said, "I still think you ought to arrange for me to talk to OZNA. This whole affair sounds fishy."

Silence.

"I think I'll just cable an account of the arrest and what followed, exactly as I've seen it. Let my editors draw their own conclusions."

Korach put his telephone back on its hook.

Two hours later, R—— called me. "Have you heard? The boys are out!" (They must have been *very* "dangerous.")

"What do you make of it?" I asked.

"Nothing, except that you're responsible for it. If you hadn't kicked up a fuss, the boys might have disappeared for good. I'm sending Washington a full report. You're going to be 'mentioned in dispatches,' pal."

"Tell you what you could do that would be more useful," I said. "I'd like to talk to the boys. Fix it for me, will you?"

Yesterday, R—— dropped by to see me:

"They won't come. They're scared. They asked me to beg you for God's sake to lay off. . . ."

"Why? They've been let out, haven't they? What're they afraid of now?"

"They say the case isn't closed. If they ever are seen with you, the cops will be down on them in a minute. . . ."

"Did you find out what happened in jail?"

"Naturally, they didn't want to talk," R—— said. "But they told me a little about the questioning. OZNA grilled them for seven hours at a time. Among other things, they were asked why they hadn't mentioned the Soviet Air Force when praising the American Air Force."

"What was their answer to that?"

"They said: for the same reason Lincoln wasn't mentioned on Lenin Day. Remember that G.I. essay on 'Why I Fight,' published in the *Stars and Stripes*? OZNA told the boys they shouldn't have read it at the Air Force celebration—it's an attack on the Partisan regime! Just before the boys were released, they were given a farewell pep talk. The Air Force show, they were told, was the extreme limit of reaction. If the democracy they talked about in their speeches was the kind they wanted in Yugoslavia, OZNA promised them they would never live to see it."

It will be a bleak future for the two kids, R—— went on. "One

of them wanted to be a newspaperman. He'd been angling for a job on *Politika*. The other wants to enter the University. With this pro-American blot on their records, they haven't a chance. You see, nobody can get a job here—except with foreigners—unless he has a good *karakteristika*. It's a sort of certificate of political reliability or unreliability. Bad *karakteristika*, no job. You need it for getting into the University, too...."

From a letter to my wife:

... *Faces are pretty stony around the Information Ministry nowadays. The squabble over OZNA has tagged me as an "Enemy of the People." I don't care much about the personal inconvenience, if any. What saddens and worries me is the mentality this affair has revealed. Either you declare us perfect, or you're a no-good reactionary.... Remember the beautiful Pomenka, my official interpreter? She's gone. It was mutual. She was unreliable—more interested in propaganda twists than the facts. And I had become a dubious character. In her place I'm trying out a Milivoje Naumovitch, fellow about fifty, speaks excellent English and French, used to be a consul in England and the U.S. He's a veteran of three wars: Balkan, 1914-18, and the last one. Had a piece of his face shot away, now nicely patched up. With his background and war record, he ought to have been good material for the Yugoslav Foreign Office. The shortage of trained personnel there is a blight on efficiency. But he can't get a job. He doesn't complain or talk about it, but I understand from his friends that he didn't roam around in the woods during the Occupation. Worse, he knew Mihailovitch personally, from war service together.*

SECOND THOUGHTS ON BALKAN ASSASSINS

My dispatches on the Chetnik trial were very enthusiastic. That was a mistake. Rereading them in the light of what I have since learned, I find I sounded more convinced that I should have been.

There are little straws and big ones. The little ones are the distortions in newspaper accounts of the trial. The late and memorable Pomenka neglected to translate them for me in our daily reading sessions. I see now, for instance, that Chetnik Major Lukatchevitch, telling the Court how hostilities first broke out between Partisans and Chetniks, was quoted by the press as saying: "Then we stabbed the Partisans in the back." But I clearly remember that he really said: "The Partisans then stabbed us in the back." Again, the papers reported that the chief judge stopped another defendant from testifying about Chetnik contacts with the British and Americans, because the Court wanted to "prevent him from defaming our noble Allies." Actually, it was the judge who persisted in all sorts of leading ques-

tions—until the prisoner himself asked for a secret session where he could freely discuss these delicate international matters. . . . In themselves, such press distortions are picayune, but they do throw doubt on the Partisans' reliability in other matters, including the pursuit of historical truth.

Then there are some larger straws, such as the wartime German poster I've just been shown, which offered a reward for Yugoslav resistance leaders. It's a familiar poster. The Partisans circulated it widely abroad. It even got into *PM*, which played it up big. The poster showed a picture of Tito, and a reward of 100,000 gold marks for his liquidation. It was supposed to prove that the Partisans were the only Yugoslavs fighting against the Germans. I remember the poster had one jagged edge, suggesting that a piece of it was missing. I now discover that a full half was missing. The other half showed a picture of Mihailovitch and a reward of 100,000 gold marks for *his* liquidation!

I've also seen many old clippings from the quisling and Axis press, denouncing both Tito and Drazha in one breath as rebels, and sometimes just Drazha. These, and transcripts of Axis broadcasts in the same tone, date from all periods of the Occupation. They provoke a logical question: why should the enemy have vilified the Chetnik chief if he was being as co-operative with them as the Partisans claim? These bits of evidence don't prove a case, but they certainly do not confirm the Partisan indictment of Mihailovitch, either. The truth, as usual, must lie somewhere in between.

Pomenka used to sit at my elbow during the Chetnik trial, breathing a hushed translation into my ear. I can see now that she did her own editing, cleverly. So perhaps Mihailovitch was not quite the ogre the Partisans made him out to me. But even without the pro-Mihailovitch evidence, the fact that the Partisans themselves occasionally knock truth on the head makes it prudent to avoid swallowing whole the charges they bring against their opponents.

"Serovitch" is a veteran Serb Socialist who has undergone a profound change of heart about the Partisans. I've checked his record for democratic opposition to the old regime, and found it solid. His testimony therefore has value.

Until recently, he's been very balanced in his appraisal of events, preferring to tell me of the royal dictatorship's mistakes instead of Tito or Mihailovitch. But the other day he rushed over in a fury. He had just heard the American radio broadcasting my review of the Parliament's early sessions. He thought I was taking in too much of

the Partisan line. In one sudden burst he exposed all his disgust and disillusionment with the present regime.

"It took me a long time," he admitted bitterly, "to understand that the Partisans are totalitarians. I went through two conversions.

"Mihailovitch wasn't a great general, and he was clumsy in diplomacy, but he was an honest man, or so I thought during the war. I even sought him out once in the mountains and begged him to stop fighting the Partisans. Drazha said: 'How can I, when they keep attacking us?' ... I didn't have anything to do with either side, but then the Russians were coming near and I went, as an old soldier and a patriot, to offer my help. The Partisans were between me and the Russians. I went to the Partisans and told them what I wanted to do. They asked why I hadn't joined them. I said, because I didn't want to fight Yugoslavs, I wanted to fight Germans. Then they began to question me. They treated me as if I was a traitor. They talked about putting me on trial. I told them to shoot me or let me fight, but to stop pretending I was guilty of anything except not being one of them. They put me in jail.

"Later they showed me documents. These seemed to prove that four large Chetnik units in one of the German offensives had fought on the side of the Nazis against the Partisans. They asked me: 'How can you believe that your friend Drazha could not have known and approved of such large-scale treason?' It was difficult to deny. I was stunned. I began to turn pro-Partisan. They told me about their democratic plans for the new Yugoslavia. I listened. I stayed in that jail three months, but when I came out I was pro-Partisan.

"For a long time, I kept on believing. I ignored the evidence all around me that the Partisans were job-grabbers, looters. I didn't mind when they confiscated my furniture; maybe I had too much when other people had so little. I overlooked many things. These are the unfortunate accompaniments of any revolution, I said. They took my brother's car. Well, the Partisan officers needed cars. But then they accused him of being a Chetnik, because his car had been hidden in the country to keep it from the Germans. The Partisans said he had lent it to the Chetniks. He disappeared three months ago. I don't know what they've done to him. He was sixty-one.

"I got permission to look for him in our birth-village in South Serbia. Miraculously, it had been untouched by the war. No Germans or Bulgarians or Chetniks or Partisans had come there. Nothing had ever happened. But the Partisans arrived right after Liberation. They picked 28 villagers and executed them as 'traitors.' This was to encourage the rest to be loyal....

"As for foreign affairs, Partisan technique is to manage things in the Russian interest exclusively. I am pro-Russian. I mean, I am a Slav. I admire the Russians for the war they fought. I am grateful for their help in liberating us. But does this mean we should entirely surrender ourselves to them? Can the USSR build up our standard of living, give us the things we need for reconstruction and prosperity? And what about our emotional and historical ties? Isn't it the West which has always been the champion of Yugoslav freedom? Who gave the Partisans guns and bullets to fight the Nazis? And who *created* Yugoslavia after the last World War? ..."

THREE PRISONERS AND AN ARCHBISHOP

"Excuse, please, Captain. Speak you German?"

He wore the scraps of a G.I. uniform. I asked him, in German, where he got it.

He had been in the old Yugoslav regular army, he told me, as he urged me toward a less crowded street. The Nazis captured him in the 1941 invasion. They interned him in Germany. When the Americans crossed the Rhine, he escaped and joined them. He attached himself to a unit and put in some good fighting, according to a note signed by an American colonel.

"I would like a job in the Embassy. I can drive a jeep. I could wash the floors."

"But why not with your own people? You're a returned veteran."

He made a face. If he had known how things would be here, he would never have come home. "I reported to Partisan Army headquarters," he said. "I wanted to re-enlist. They threw me out. I went again. I asked for bread. They threw me out. 'Why weren't you in the hills? What were you doing in Germany? Get out before we lock you up, you fascist!'"

In a *kafana* I struck up a conversation with two more PW's. One still wore the blue jeans the Red Cross had given him, stitched with the letters KG (*Kriegsgefangener*). Both had the same story: internment in Germany after the invasion; rescue by the Americans; wonderful food and treatment by the Americans; hopeful return to Yugoslavia—and persecution. "We are worse off now than in the German camp. The seven days from the frontier to Belgrade were terrible. In every village the Partisans arrested us, asked questions. Several times we were beaten. We have not been allowed to work. They keep calling us in for more questions and threats." The other said: "My mother starved for four years, but she wouldn't sell my

clothes. Otherwise, I would have nothing to wear now." Just then, a lieutenant-commissar came in for a *Spritzer*. Our conversation turned vigorously to the weather. . . .

Anna M——, who teaches English, was grilled for five hours by OZNA. They wanted a complete list of her students. I asked who gave her the black eye. "That happened when I inquired if they put the same questions to teachers of Russian."

It works both ways. The sergeant at the British press office has lost his teacher of Serb. She was ordered to stop giving lessons. No Serb for Anglo-Americans; no English for Yugoslavs. . . .

Politics, as it must to all men, has finally caught up to me. I have been seen strolling with Nadya a few times. Last time I phoned her, she said she couldn't see me again. The police had been to her flat, talked to the *Hausmeister*, asked all about Nadya's history. The poor girl is scared stiff.

I've had a first-hand report of conditions in the provinces, from a young man who's just finished his military service. He says two methods are common out there for dealing with a "reactionary." One is to draft him into the army, if he is not too old, and send him off to a distant part of the country, where he either absorbs a "re-education" or disappears. The other is to have him beaten, killed or kidnapped by "bandits," who somehow always elude police pursuit. My soldier gave me names, places and dates, in case I want to check this myself. I do, but I've not received permission yet to make any journey into the country. Without a pass I couldn't get two hours past Belgrade.

I've managed, however, to take one quick trip out of the capital, only about 20 kilometers, just to get away from the city a bit and have a look at trees and peasant costumes, but the excursion netted something more. The place was Rakovitsa, which has a Serb Orthodox monastery, a historic graveyard of old Serb heroes, and a shrine to the Virgin. It was the Virgin's feast day, occasion for a county fair, merrymaking, prayer and a sermon. Peasant carts loaded with things for sale overflowed for 100 yards beyond the monastery gate.

The candybox shrine was packed with villagers, standing tightly pressed, in an aroma of burning wax, under the miniature blue Byzantine vaults. C——, my guide, wanted me to see everything, and the peasants co-operated by squeezing back to make room while C—— pushed me from behind until I was flat against the Virgin's

altar, which lay almost hidden beneath wreaths, bread, fruit and money offerings heaped upon it. Someone thrust a lighted taper into my hand, a gesture of welcome and of full admission into the mysteries. "Who is he?" whispered an ancient woman, and smiled and patted my arm when C—— said "an American."

It being a grand occasion, the priest was Archbishop Joseph himself, ranking prelate of Serbia. Joseph's see is really in Macedonia but the Partisans have not permitted him to return there since the war, because he is not a Macedonian. The Archbishop, twinkle-eyed and jovially round, was fully launched in his sermon. His episcopal crown anchored snugly on his head, the majestic staff of office in his hand, and his white whiskers glistening in the hot and humid air, he stood there in the center of the tiny church, closely ringed by the faithful, and gave them cheerful words of counsel. Don't be foolish, he told his auditors, don't believe foolish lies. If they tell you that man descended from the monkeys, scoff at them, but do it quietly, and remember instead that man may become a monkey.

(This is the Joseph before whose house in Belgrade a mob once gathered, chanting "Down with Joseph! Down with Joseph!", until he stepped out on his balcony, looked down benignly, and inquired: "Thank you, my children, but which Joseph do you mean—Stalin or Broz-Tito?")

The sermon went on, blandly, the peasants and the prelate smiling, everybody knowing he was approaching as close to sedition as he dared, and the Partisan soldier on guard, in one far corner, frowning blackly.

Outside, there were many more Partisans, stalking through the crowds. One peasant waited until a guard had passed, then he made a grab for my hand, kissed it, and turned hurriedly away without a word. I tried, with C——'s help, to talk to some of the others. They were friendly enough, but uneasy. How are things here? I wanted to know. Nobody would speak out, as if each were unsure of the other. One man came up close and muttered: "They have taken my son," and walked on. I plodded around the monastery grounds for a half-hour, trying to get somebody to stand his ground and talk, but all I could get was a brief, "Ah, these are hard times" or "How is it in America?" Once a man asked, "Will you bring back our little King?" Finally, it occurred to me that I had better leave, because my presence there was dampening the festivities. But as I turned to go, the crowd began to follow, in a kind of farewell procession, and one fellow, encouraged by the bustle, said, too loudly: "Mr. American, we are not free to tell you what we would like to tell you——." A

Partisan overheard this. The soldier clutched the other's shirtfront, shouted at him indignantly, and then began to slap him rhythmically on the face, back and forth.

I hurried away before I could do more damage. When we got clear of the monastery, I asked C——: "What was the soldier yelling?" "He was saying: 'Why do you tell lies, why do you say that you are not free to speak? It isn't true!'..."

A pleasant reunion yesterday with Bogdan Raditsa, but an unpleasant ending. Raditsa, attached to the Royal Yugoslav Embassy in the U. S., went over to Tito during the war and became chief of the Partisan press bureau in New York. He did good work there, including a few articles in *The Nation* which helped make Tito respectable in America.

Raditsa was sitting in the Information Ministry's waiting room when I found him. He said he was a sort of "adviser" at the Ministry but admitted he didn't have much to do. We went to dinner together, at the Park Restaurant opposite the old Turkish fortress in Kalemegdan, where a White Russian balalaika orchestra warbles plaintive *nitchevos* in the teeth of a revolution that has finally caught up with them.

Bogdan was uncomfortably vehement. He behaved as if his job at the Information Ministry required him to work after hours propagandizing me. He had just visited his native Dalmatia. He estimated the war damage at 75 per cent of everything. He refused to believe that Greece could have suffered equally. When he asked me what I thought about conditions here, and I cautiously commented on the police repression, he flared up. He sounded curiously like any People's Front orator in the *Skupshтина*. He also insisted that the Partisans alone had saved Yugoslavia. My suggestion that the Partisans had of course helped hugely but that the Russians and the Allies had contributed something too made him almost indignant. This was very curious behavior for a liberal ex-writer of *The Nation*, I thought.

At this point the tension was relieved by the appearance of an elderly gentleman, who introduced himself as Ilyitch, and apologized for sitting down at our table, but all the other tables were filled, which was true. The rest of the dinner passed in polite conversation. When we left, we walked down the street together. At the corner, Raditsa was hailed by an acquaintance, with whom he stopped for a moment while Ilyitch and I walked slowly on. Then Raditsa came running up behind us. He seized me by the arm, said a gruff "*Dobro vece*" to Ilyitch, and hurried me away. After a few paces, he whis-

pered: "That man, that Ilyitch, I've just learned he's had secret connections with every Yugoslav Government for the past twenty years. It's not safe to be seen with him!" Raditsa was completely upset. His voice was choked, and his eyes were bright with fear. The incident antagonized me, not against Ilyitch, who hadn't said anything remotely suspicious, but against Raditsa, or rather against a mental climate which can force a man like him, whom I knew once to be courageous and honest, into a complex of fears and dogmas.*

TITO LOSES A VICE-PREMIER

"Yugoslavia cannot find democracy through the arbitrary rule and doctrinaire exclusiveness of the Partisan regime," Milan Grol told me last night a few hours after resigning as Vice-Premier in Marshal Tito's cabinet.

Grol's retirement is the first open defiance of the Communist nucleus which has dominated the Government coalition since Yugoslavia's liberation.

His record as a democrat is beyond honest reproach. Several times minister in early Yugoslav governments, he went into opposition from the moment King Alexander established the dictatorship in 1929. Unlike other prewar ministers—and Communist members of the present Partisan Government—he still lives in a ramshackly little house on a humble little street, instead of the mansion—or palace—which is the customary Yugoslav emolument of office. In July, 1943, long before the Tito-Subasitch pact, Grol quit King Peter's London Government and demanded its co-operation with the Partisan resistance movement. After his return to liberated Belgrade last March, a special Vice-Premiership, senior in rank to the same title held by Communist Edward Kardelj, was created for Grol by Tito. The Marshal knew that Grol's reputation as a democrat would be extra-fancy window-dressing for the regime, inside the country and abroad. What Grol does and says now, therefore, cannot be dismissed as "fascist," though the effort may be made to do so.

I heard a sheet of paper scratching under my door. When I looked into the corridor, nobody was there. The paper, typed in French, was Grol's "Declaration to the Press on the Occasion of his Departure from

* At this time, I learned later, Raditsa was nearing the crisis of an inner struggle between loyalty to principle and loyalty to a regime. In January, 1946, principle won. Raditsa managed to get out of Yugoslavia and return to the U. S., where he has since been writing excellent *anti*-Tito articles for American magazines.

the Government." It explained briefly that "the dangerous and arbitrary revolutionary decisions taken by the 'People's Authority' during the war might have been justified as protective measures against armed adversaries. . . . But it has now become apparent that the postwar program, presumably based on the Tito-Subasitch Pact, the Yalta Agreement, and the Government's own pledges, suppresses civil rights . . . puts the execution of the new laws in the hands of unelected authorities . . . is one-sided, incomplete . . . and in no way creates the proper atmosphere for free elections. . . ."

On the telephone Grol was reluctant to let me see him, until I suggested he owed it to his principles to have his full say in the American press, because he certainly would not get it in the Yugoslav press.

In the dimming light outside Grol's door I could see the still unhealed gashes in the yard where a bomb had fallen during the last Allied raid on Belgrade. Grol received me in a tiny living room too small for its bulky old-fashioned table, stiff wooden chairs and big gilt-framed family portraits. Sixty-nine, he looked eighty, face yellow and haggard, eyes watery, voice rasping and tired. He was obviously ill. In fact, he had gotten out of bed to receive me, and he wore pyjamas.

"There are men of real worth in the Partisan movement; there are good tendencies in it," the ex-Vice-Premier said wearily. "But it is fanatic. It may end by provoking reaction and underground rightist resistance. That's why I remained in the Government so long, although I had no power, no portfolio, no function. I tried—and failed—to persuade my Communist colleagues that only by compromise could they solve our country's problems.

"What happened? Nothing. Then, suddenly, a week before this bogus Parliament convenes, we get dumped upon us a whole body of proposed laws in whose preparation we had not the smallest part. There wasn't even an agreement on the principles behind the laws before they were written.

"All I could do was try to patch the worst things up here and there—like the attempt to take away the vote from the *relatives* of collaborationists! But it was hopeless. Every law was contaminated by the vendetta against all who did not join the Partisans—against anybody who stayed at home, or was in a German prison camp, or in exile."

For a half-hour Grol gave me chapter and verse on the texts of the laws, exposing each cleverly contrived loophole through which the Partisan hand can reach in and grab at the throat of liberty.

"These laws," he said, "are now being approved by Parliament. But Parliament decides nothing. It is controlled by a small group who are even fixing in advance the entire structure of the Constituent Assembly, what it must do and how, before it has been elected. Their leader, Moshe Pijade, has stated openly that if the Assembly dares to change the Parliament's decisions, the people will rise up and smash it."

"No," said Grol, as he got up feebly to bid me goodbye, "the laws may *sound* democratic, but force remains the real law here. In democracy's name we are being commanded to accept arbitrary decrees arbitrarily executed. Vague laws administered by dogmatic men cannot build and safeguard the democracy which Yugoslavia desperately needs."

I inquired if he intended to retire completely.

"No, I shall go on resisting. I'll do it the only way I know how—from the floor of Parliament. Though I have no illusions about the effectiveness of such resistance in the face of totalitarianism, I cannot, and will not, join in any secret conspiracy. I am opposed to all idea of counter-revolution. I pray to God that the authoritarian forces now in power will relent before others, less moderate than I, are pushed violently to the extreme right. In that direction lies bloody civil war, and Yugoslavia may become a Greece in reverse."

Which brings me all the way around, full circle....

DICTATORSHIP TAKES A HOLIDAY

My Grol interview has come thundering back by Serbo-Croat short-wave on the "Voice of America" radio. *Reuters*, *AP* and the French agency must have filed only brief bulletins on the resignation. Their offices don't encourage long pieces on complicated Balkan politics. The other correspondents work only for weeklies and monthlies. My little effort therefore stands out like the proverbial sore thumb. It has lifted me, a shade bewildered, to a position of some prominence.

Strange what authority a ghostly transatlantic voice can exert. The Government people are now doing handsprings trying to be nice to me. Twenty minutes after the broadcast came through, the Information Ministry telephoned in oily accents that Moshe Pijade would be pleased to grant me the interview, at my convenience, which I asked for a month ago. Pijade, dean of the Communist Party, is the nominal Vice-President of Parliament and its real boss. The Ministry also assured me, and repeated itself several times, that I have but to ask for anything and it shall be granted.

The biggest development of all is the timid emergence of the merest wisp of a shadow of democratic procedure in the Parliament today. It's incredible that my dispatch could have had anything to do with this—and I don't really believe it myself. But my Opposition sources can find no other explanation for the sudden reform. And Korach, the Assistant Minister of Information, who was loathesomely deferential to me when I arrived at today's session, took special care to ask me later (he actually rubbed his hands as he breathed on me) whether I had fully grasped the democratic significance of what I had seen.

What happened was this: When the broadcast was made yesterday, the *Skupshchina* was in recess. Before this afternoon's resumption, the agenda for the session was hastily rewritten. To the Opposition's high amazement, it found itself formally scheduled on the agenda, to speak *against* the current bill, the one prescribing the form of the Constituent Assembly. This is the first time in the Partisan *Skupshchina's* existence that a critic of the Government has been allowed to deliver a full-length speech, let alone had formal recognition on the agenda!

True, the speaker, a henchman of Grol's, was amply heckled. Also, the Opposition's criticism was immediately answered, to deafening applause, by Vice-Premier Kardelj (who got a big hand at the outset when Tito ostentatiously beckoned him to sit next to him in the seat formerly occupied by Grol as senior Vice-Premier). It is nevertheless undeniable that the Opposition deputy's voice could be clearly heard and that he was allowed to continue till the end.

A final unprecedented event in this memorable day was the taking of a secret vote on the bill after cloture of debate. Hitherto, the *Skupshchina* has been allowed to register its sentiments only by a mass shouting of *Da!* (Yes), and the chairman hasn't even bothered to ask if anyone objected. This time there was a roll call, and each member went up to the platform in turn and dropped a sealed envelope into the urn!

I went home before the voting ended, to write my story and then get the final score by telephone. We had trouble convincing the clerk in the Parliament office that we were entitled to know the results. "Why should you be interested?" he asked, bemused. "The bill was passed. Isn't that enough for you? Who cares about the few reactionaries who voted against!" But we did, and we astounded him further by assuring him that the fact there had been a vote, and some "Nays," was more important than the bill itself. The count was 375 in favor—and 13 opposed....

Vice-Premier Grol's resignation has been spoon-fed to the local population. The morning after Grol quit, the slow build-up began with a cartoon picturing him in the foul company of the London émigré reactionaries, a villain among villains. Three days after the event, the press announced: "The President of the Ministerial Council, Marshal Tito, has accepted the resignation of Vice-Premier Milan Grol." Just that, and nothing more.

Grol had sent Tito a detailed letter of resignation, of which I've seen a secretly circulated hand-written translation. It explained why Grol could no longer remain in the Government, and earnestly offered his co-operation in future reforms. Not a word or hint of this was published. Instead, on the day following laconic disclosure of the resignation, General Milovan Djilas, the CP's chief drumbeater, assailed Grol in *Borba* as a stooge of the wicked foreign press.

Borba and *Politika*, by the way, constitute the Belgrade press, all of it. *Borba* speaks officially for the Communist Party, and *Politika* for the Government, which is Communist-controlled. There are no other dailies in the capital. Grol and anyone else who might want to speak up have no paper to write in, either in Belgrade or in any other city of Yugoslavia. Weekly and monthly magazines are organs of one "anti-fascist" group or another, all under the Government's thumb. The only independent journal is *Selo* ("Village"). Organ of the Agrarian Party, this was originally intended to be a daily, but the Government blandly cut down its newsprint supply and turned it into a weekly, and sometimes less. *Selo* is regularly disemboweled by the censorship. Somebody has smuggled photostats to me of two dummy editions. On one I can see the censor's cross where he has slashed the text of an American protest to Moscow about Rumania; on the other the text of a speech by British Foreign Secretary Bevin about the Balkans has been blotted out.

When the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, *Politika* gave it three hundred words in small type on an inside page, and *Borba* didn't mention it at all. Even now, when Jap envoys are talking peace terms with MacArthur, the Yugoslav press is still splashing headlines about Soviet advances in Manchuria, adding two lines at the bottom about the Anglo-American War in the Pacific.

One American paper is quoted frequently here, without benefit of OWI—and that paper is *PM*. But only because it is critical of the U. S. Every time my esteemed employer runs an exposé of some American iniquity, bingo!—it's No. 1 news for the Yugoslav press and radio.

THE PARTISANS LOAD THE DICE

The 1945 *Skupshchina* has now adjourned. It sat for a total of exactly eleven days—during which it passed no less than fourteen bills, of which eleven are fundamental laws for the internal structure of the new Yugoslavia. Prepared by Communist Vice-Premier Kardelj's commission of experts, they were raced through the cabinet and a hand-picked Legislative Committee in record time. They were then presented to Parliament, which approved each bill after the briefest of debates and without significant amendment.

This fact, by itself, suggests to anyone willing to think about it that something must be wrong with a legislature which can alter the face of its country so radically with so little hesitation.

Each bill, upon close inspection, shows an identical pattern: benign intentions buttressed by resonant democratic phrases, wherein one or several anti-democratic jokers lie artfully concealed. All parts settle snugly into the whole like a mystery story contrived by a master professional. As is proper in the very best of "whodunnits," you can follow one imperceptible little clue after another until you blink into the bright light of revelation. In this "Case of the Yugoslav Double-Talker," however, you finish up by uncovering a corpse instead of a killer, and the corpse can easily be identified in the ideological morgue as that of democracy, not of fascism as advertised.

The Partisans say that Yugoslavia is ready to get on to the business of free and democratic elections. Now such elections usually imply a voter's choice of several candidates and parties. A party is formed by individuals organizing themselves into a group. These individuals have to journey around the country, whoop things up, write in the papers, make speeches, in order to get established as a going political concern. They normally perform these operations without fear of arrest. People who might support and eventually vote for them are also innocent of such fears. But not according to the laws which have just been set down to insure democratic elections, Partisan style.

One of these laws begins energetically by guaranteeing the right of association and assembly, which is the essence of party activity. But it then proceeds to prohibit any party which is "fascist" or "pro-fascist." It fails to define these terms. It also forbids any party which "spreads discord." Again, no definition. Opposition candidates for office must be confirmed as politically virtuous by government-selected electoral commissions. To finish things off, the law requires permission in writing forty-eight hours in advance of any meeting. Such per-

mission must come from the local "People's Authority." That body is the unelected delegate of the unelected Partisan regime. And the "People's Authority" is empowered categorically to ban any meeting which, in its own debonair judgment, may be a "danger" to public tranquillity.

Article 1 of the law for the press proclaims the liberty of the press, but eighteen subsequent articles restrict it. Article 6 says nobody may work on a newspaper if he has ever had anything to do with "fascist or pro-fascist" publications or writings. Article 11 threatens suspension of any publication which prints "false and alarming rumors"—an elastic phrase which could be stretched to cover almost everything except official communiqués. Who enjoys this power of suspension? The Public Prosecutor, an appointee of the "People's Authority." Nothing in the twenty-seven articles of the press laws puts the smallest restraint on the State's existing monopoly over newsprint and printing-plant equipment, a monopoly which can throttle any publication simply by withholding paper and machinery.

Lest the *voter* go astray despite all these obstructions, a law about suffrage takes care of him, too. Nobody who held a position of rank in any of the wartime fascist organizations will be allowed to vote. Well, that is clear and defined, and difficult to complain against. But the vote is also withheld, almost as an afterthought, from all persons ever associated in any shape or form with fascist activities. This reduces to zero the electoral rights of all who were "forgiven" by Tito's much publicized amnesties. More important, it is superbly vague. With sufficient imagination, it can be used against almost anybody outside the Partisan pale.

In my early dispatches, I said that the new legislation was constructive—and I still think so. The menace lies in the ambiguity of the escape clauses, at the mercy of prejudiced and uncontrollable administrators. The fatal fallacy of the present "era of reconstruction" was neatly put to a jeering Parliament the other day by an Opposition speaker shouting above the tumult: "The trouble with all your laws is that there is no confidence between us! You do not believe that our criticisms are made in good faith—and we do not believe that your 'People's Authority' will administer the laws impartially."

An apologist for the Partisans *could* ask why the critics don't wait until the Partisans *prove* their insincerity by arbitrary interpretation of the laws.

Well, the Partisans have already proved it—by the way they have begun implementing the new laws. Last week, in one precinct here in Belgrade, the committee struck a man off the register because some-

body said he sold his overcoat in the black market to buy food. Another was disqualified because he was once arrested (and released) by OZNA. Conversely, a woman who stole a kilo of sugar was reinstated on the register because her daughter, aged fifteen, tattled on schoolmates who had scribbled anti-Tito slogans on the classroom walls.

None of these charges has to be supported by evidence. The Commission on Voters meets in public session with the citizens of the district, and accepts hearsay as proof. I saw a citizen get up and charge that his neighbor had once sheltered a Chetnik for a night and later been rewarded with potatoes and wood. Even if this were true, it hardly seems worth disfranchisement. On the strength of the other's say-so, however, the minutes of the Commission recorded that the neighbor had no right to vote. At the close of this meeting the chairman joyfully cried: "Comrades! Now you see how powerful the People's Authority is! Now you know what real democracy means!"

"... NOR IRON BARS A CAGE."

Some time ago, after abolition of censorship over the foreign press, I congratulated Information Minister Kosanovitch on this excellent move and he complacently replied: "Well, I think we'll be entitled from now on to be more selective in the kind of correspondents we allow into Yugoslavia." So I wrote a dispatch hailing the decline and fall of the censor, but adding: *It is hoped, however, that this startling proof of the regime's growing self-confidence will not be weakened by recent hints that henceforth the entry of correspondents into Yugoslavia will be more "selective."* This mild injunction has caused a noisy row between BBC and Radio Belgrade.

BBC's "diplomatic correspondent" started the uproar the other day by broadcasting: "When censorship was discontinued in Yugoslavia, it seemed that freedom of the press was being re-established. . . . But the Yugoslav Minister of Information has declared that now measures would be taken not to allow the entry of any journalist who might criticize the Government! . . ." Not quite what Kosanovitch said or what I wrote, the BBC blast had been dreamed up from editorial comment on my original dispatch. *Tanyug*, the official news agency, rushed on the air with an authorization by Kosanovitch "to deny most categorically" the British assertions. It was triumphantly noted that "according to the new Press Law, the entry of the foreign press into Yugoslavia is permitted without previous permit."

This evened the score in falsification: the Press Law does stipulate

free entry of "foreign press" but the phrase means foreign *newspapers*, not newspapermen!

Maybe correspondents will be let in without discrimination, but no freedom of the press is complete without freedom to move around the country once a man gets inside, and this freedom definitely does not exist in Yugoslavia.

For a time, in fact, it looked as if correspondents couldn't even have their own vehicles. After much persuasion, the American Embassy assigned a jeep as a one-car "motor-pool" for us. I was made grand custodian. The first time out, I parked it for the night, with steering-wheel chained to the shaft by a good strong lock, in front of the Moskva. I admonished the heavily-armed Partisan sentry at the door to guard it well. An invisible man drove it off before morning. The sentry had no idea where the jeep had gone or how. Toward noon, it was found in a distant part of town, abandoned and half wrecked after persons unknown had given up trying to twist the locked steering-wheel. That was the end of the correspondents' motor-pool.

But even if we had cars, we couldn't get very far in them. More "security" passes are needed for travel now than after Liberation—when fighting still raged a short distance from Belgrade. The Partisans simply don't trust us out into the country, on the theory that what reporters don't see can't hurt the regime.

Nearly three weeks ago, Pannos Morfopoulos of *Newsweek* and I put in a bid for Macedonia. Reports from that area are tantalizing and contradictory. The Greeks say the Yugoslavs are collecting troops on the border. The Yugoslavs deny this, and in daily horror stories the press here tells how fellow Slavs in Greek Macedonia are being tortured and flayed and driven in thousands north across the frontier. Yugoslav border towns teem with refugees, we keep hearing. On the other hand, two members of the French Military Mission who went down there recently, after being warned the Greeks would fire on them as soon as they crossed the line, unmolestedly ventured five miles into Greece, their guns at the ready, until they came upon a company of British garrison troops—peacefully playing football.

An oral request to the Information Ministry for permission to go have a look for ourselves brought assurance that this would be immediately granted provided we made formal request in writing. We wrote a very respectful letter. After a week of inaction, I mentioned the matter to Korach. He said it took a little time to notify the military authorities and official reception committees on our route. I asked if

it wouldn't be simpler if all correspondents received a permanent pass good for all parts of the country. "Impossible!" cried Korach, regarding me as if I had just alighted from the moon. "Do you expect me to reorganize Yugoslavia's entire administrative system!" The next day we were advised that our request had been rejected by the military authorities, without explanation.

In view of the regime's proud boast that the press in Yugoslavia is free beyond compare, we felt justified in protesting this bizarre decision to the Information Minister. Kosanovitch looked deeply distressed, as always. The next day he told me he had mulled the problem over with Marshal Tito, and thought the decision would be rescinded.

That was about ten days ago. The silence remained absolute. I decided to forego the pleasure of Macedonia. The Russians have at last agreed to open occupied Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria to the foreign press. They have approved seven or eight correspondents for each of these countries. My name appears on all three lists. I shall try Hungary first.

Two days ago I announced this to the Information Ministry, and requested my exit visa to leave Yugoslavia as soon as possible. I added that I was packed and eager to depart. Meanwhile I went around saying goodbye to everybody. Yesterday, I received my exit visa. This morning Korach telephoned me that my request—for Macedonia—has been "granted"....

PORTRAIT OF A PARTISAN

My ten Yugoslav weeks having been restricted to Belgrade, I want very much to come back later and see the rest of the country (including mysterious Macedonia). The Information Ministry is tolerant of my return, but to the extent of a re-entry permit good only for a single month. This is the maximum, they say; after that, I must go through the motions again of application for a regular visa in the regular, time-consuming way.

Ever since my first interview with him a fortnight ago, I have had access to the sympathetic and intelligent Moshe Pijade. Accordingly, I went to him today, to pay my final respects and explain my visa troubles. My point was that I was going to Hungary, a new and unexplored land; I couldn't possibly learn everything I wanted to about Hungary in only one month. He listened gravely, phoned the Information Ministry and barked some orders. I now possess a three-month permit, signed with the magic name of Pijade.

This sixty-four-year-old foxy grandpa, with the bushy tobacco-stained

mustache of a peasant, the long hair of a poet and the erudite accents of a professor, is a major reason for my still retaining some vestiges of charity toward the Partisans.

Pijade spent fourteen of Yugoslavia's twenty-three prewar years in jail. He never saw a talking picture or heard the radio until he was released in 1939. He had time enough in his cell to translate Marx and Engels into Serb. "You see, I really know Yugoslavia from the inside," he told me.

In his youth, Pijade achieved distinction as an impressionist painter, but gave that up to quarrel with the monarchy. His early politics developed from republicanism to socialism to communism. When he went to jail he was titular chief of the Party, as senior member of its Politburo. During the Occupation, he stepped aside for the younger Tito, supporting him loyally. Now, besides being Vice-President and boss of Parliament, he is one of the Big Seven, the tough Communist nucleus which rules Yugoslavia.

Pijade is devoutly consecrated to his mission, but with a sparkle and an intellectual humility which makes him refreshingly human after my exposure to the dogmatism of his colleagues. He is the sort who could sign an execution order with a genuine tear in his eye.

The first time we met, Pijade had a transcript of my earlier *Nation* dispatch on his desk. He remarked with a smile that, in view of the nice things I had said there he forgave me my later "transgression" on Grol. This led us to discuss the functions and ethics of foreign correspondence, and I pretty nearly, but not quite, got Pijade to agree that the job requires reporting both sides of a question—an epochal concession to extract from a Communist. I went away from Pijade with his secret telephone number, an invitation to use it at will, and a warm appreciation of his unique reasonableness.

A little while later, I found myself in the preposterous position of being asked for advice by my powerful friend, the dean of the Yugoslavia Communist Party.

Tito has a twenty-four-year-old son, Zharko, now a lieutenant in the Partisan Army but late of the Red Army, and bearer of the title "Hero of the Soviet Union" since losing his right hand in the Battle of Moscow. Belgrade last week was agog with "eye-witness" rumors that the younger Broz had fallen afoul of a drunken Russian soldier in an argument about a girl outside the "Crocodile," a local nightclub. The Russian was said to have fired six shots into Tito's offspring, leaving him dead or dying.

This was the liveliest hot potato the correspondents had handled in living memory. Nobody filed a line on it. The obviously delicate

international possibilities of the yarn, plus the rashness of linking such capers with the name of the most powerful citizen in southeast Europe, worked better than any censorship to keep the unhappy newsmen in check. But sooner or later, obviously, the story somehow would leak into print abroad.

In my own hunt for the facts, I went finally to Moshe Pijade. "Nonsense," he said, "Zharko isn't dead; I saw him myself in the hospital yesterday. He was accidentally wounded by his own gun. There was no Russian and no fight. It could happen to anybody who has only one hand."

I asked if a Government declaration would be issued to stop the rumors. This startled him: "Do you think it's necessary? Why?"

"Well," I replied, laboring not to show I didn't quite believe his story, "right now the situation is unsteady because all the correspondents have unconfirmed reports about a shooting, and the official silence tends to confirm it. A communiqué would give the newspapermen something definite. It might prevent undesirable versions from getting out of the country."

"But I don't have authority in a matter like this. How could I give out such a communiqué?"

"I know. But you are in a position to discuss it with the one man who does have the authority."

Pijade twinkled, then turned solemn. "You really think it would help?"

"I do," also solemnly.

"Very well. Telephone me tomorrow evening. I may have some news."

He did. It was the advance text of the communiqué, which appeared the morning after that in a quiet little box on the front page of the newspapers. It said that young Broz, climbing into his jeep, had fumbled with his good left hand to adjust the safety latch on his revolver. "The gun went off, and the lieutenant was seriously wounded. Only after a successful operation was it possible to establish the cause of the accident (?). Zharko's condition has now taken a turn for the better." *

~

At our last meeting, I ventured to tell Moshe Pijade that I had cabled my final analytical story about Yugoslavia to *The Nation*

* The communiqué did keep the lid on the real version until Mollie Thayer, free-lance reporter who reached Belgrade after my departure, bluntly wired to the International News Service that Tito's son had been shot. For this, Mrs. Thayer's visit to Yugoslavia was vigorously terminated shortly thereafter.

and that its tone was less enthusiastic than my first had been. I said I wanted him to know about it from me before anybody else told him. I knew it would be resented by supporters of the regime, I said, but I felt or hoped that he, for one, would understand why I had to write it.

The Old Man sighed, closed his eyes, ran a hand through his shaggy hair, then began to talk, quietly and sadly, on the fallacy of a liberalism which seeks a perfect world. He told me he was disappointed that I had gone the way of other well-meaning Americans. I would never understand the Yugoslav dilemma unless I could grasp the black perfidy of what had preceded the Partisans and the evil which would follow them if they yielded to the folly of the liberal philosophy. I wrote with honesty, perhaps, but without responsibility. Why couldn't I see that the enemies of the Partisans were my enemies as well, if what I desired for Yugoslavia was an end of the ancient tyrannies?

I tried to explain that precisely because I desired this I could not take joy from the new immoderation and the new tyrannies, which were destroying the gains and might finish by betraying the purposes of the Revolution. And where was the virtue in the tireless campaign to make the Yugoslav people hostile to Britain and America?

Pijade snapped there was no such campaign; the people were already hostile enough without needing propaganda. For the first time since I've known him, his conversation began to echo the party-line editorials. He spoke bitterly of the early British antagonism to Tito, the BBC's portrayal of Drazha Mihailovitch as a Robin Hood and of the Partisans as bandits.

"Ah," he said, "it wasn't easy to act loyally toward the Allies when they finally came to our help, but we kept faith, for the sake of the fight against fascism. Since then, our people have been wondering whether the Allies now mean to take away everything we suffered so much to gain. Look at their policy on Trieste. Look at the way the Allied representatives here spend all their time with enemies of our regime. The conduct of the American and British missions in Belgrade is a scandal!"

He stood up nervously and paced the room. "You wouldn't believe how some of your compatriots behave, how they libel and insult us every day! Your Major Gates, your military attaché, have you heard what he did? One of our officials lives in the villa next door to this Gates. In this official's garden a sentry is always on patrol. Gates called a Yugoslav officer and ordered him to remove the guard. The officer asked the pardon of Gates, but the guard was necessary and he had

no authority to send him away. So Gates seizes this officer, an officer wearing the uniform of Yugoslavia, and slaps him! He slaps him, calls him 'dirty spy,' pushes him to the door, kicks him in the behind and throws him out!"

DATELINE: BUDAPEST

For a time back there I thought I might have to walk from Belgrade to Budapest, or else fly back to Naples first, which would have been like going from New York to Washington in order to get to Montreal. No trains run between Yugoslavia and neighboring Hungary. Motor traffic is practically nil in any direction. The Danube links the two capitals, but there aren't any passenger boats on it. The only airplane connection is Soviet. It took me a half day to track down the Russian transport bureau; nobody in the Yugoslav administration had ever heard of it. When I asked to buy a ticket for the next flight to Budapest, the Red Army Air Force officer in charge became amiably occult. He assured me there was plenty of time. He would let me know when the next plane arrived from Moscow for Budapest. I might even have to wait out the next two or three planes after that, because he had a waiting list and, naturally, Soviet personnel received priority. Finally, I walked into the American Embassy on my knees, and persuaded the motor-pool to assign me a jeep and driver as far as Subotica, on the Hungarian frontier. From there, I could hitchhike, maybe.

Up at 5 A.M. for a fast drive north, reaching Subotica in under three hours. Nothing eventful en route except a few road blocks, where Yugoslav documents passed us quickly through, and a long column of Soviet troops slogging south on foot, each platoon headed by a picture of Stalin on a pole.

I carried a letter for one Ivan Polanyi—which isn't really his name—owner of Subotica's largest coffeehouse, the *Duna*, from his Belgrade niece. This niece had assured me that big trucks plying between the fertile Banat and Hungary all stopped at the *Duna* for a dram of *rađije*, and her uncle would surely be able to find me an obliging teamster.

The fat woman at the till blinked when I asked for Mr. Polanyi. I gathered that the proprietor wasn't the proprietor any more, but if I would step outside, and walk around the corner and down an alley and come back behind the café, I would find a small two-story house off the rear court, and Mr. Polanyi inside it.

Two Partisan soldiers reclined in the yard as I tapped on the indicated door. After my halting explanation in German, a maid let me in

and fetched a white-haired, stooping personage in a ragged old bathrobe. This was Mr. Polanyi, very sick and very agitated.

He neglected to offer me a chair. He snatched the letter, read it in one awful glance, tore it feverishly and stuffed it into his pocket.

"She is crazy, sending you to me!" he cried. "Go away! You must go away at once!"

"But—", I began.

"Are you English?" he broke in wildly.

"No, I'm American."

"Thank God! English would have been even worse. The newspaper here has written a big attack on the English. It would finish me if you were English. I've just come out. Six weeks in prison. It was terrible. Please, please go away."

"But your niece said—."

"My niece couldn't know. It is dangerous to write to Belgrade, impossible to telephone. No trucks come through here. Besides, I don't own the coffeehouse any more. They took it away. I had a bakery. They took that away, too. They said I was a suspected enemy of the regime. First the Hungarians took my bakery during the war and made bread for their soldiers. Now the Yugoslavs have taken it again, and blame me for being a 'collaborationist.' I am lost. Go away, and don't try to see me again."

I mumbled a helpless apology and moved toward the door.

"No!" he shrieked. "Not that way! You must not be seen leaving. Go out the back way."

I told him about the soldiers outside.

"Oh, my God!" he moaned. "Well then, go out quickly. And if anyone asks why you came to see me, say it was to bring regards from my niece. Nothing more."

The door slammed before I could say goodbye.

The fat woman at the coffeehouse told me Subotica had a Russian garrison. There might be an occasional military car going over the frontier.

I set out for the Soviet *Kommandatura*...

5

Yugoslavia Revisited

Moshe Pijade's three-month re-entry visa to Yugoslavia grew withered and sere in my pocket while I lost myself in other Balkan labors. Three months sped by in Russian-occupied Hungary; three more in Rumania; then a second descent upon Athens, to observe the observers sent by Britain, France and the U. S. for an honest count in Greece's first elections since Metaxas. It was not until seven months after my departure from Belgrade that I was ready for another look at the Partisan experiment.

At Tito's Legation in Athens, Yugoslav Minister Izidor Tsankar was remotely polite. "Certainly," said he, "we will telegraph your application at once. We have no direct connections with Belgrade. The Greeks, you know. . . . The message must go via London. It may take a week."

I hauled out my ragged visa. The Minister gazed upon the magic name of Pijade scrawled on the bottom. "Please sit down," he pleaded, with respectful urgency. He pushed a button. An authentic bottle of *sljivovitsa* came in. We toasted each other and all the Federal Republics of Yugoslavia. I expressed my sorrow that fascinating investigations into the new economic democracy of the happy lands under Russian occupation had caused my Yugoslav visa to expire. The Minister was cordially sympathetic. "Under the circumstances," said he, "it will not be necessary to query Belgrade." Would the Minister facilitate my entry into Yugoslavia by the Doirani frontier post, which is in Macedonia? "Doirani is only a patrol point—foreigners are not allowed to cross there—but in your case it can be arranged. Kindly leave your passport. A visa will be ready in twenty-four hours." It was. On my second visit, the *sljivovitsa* came forth again, for salutes to Tito, Truman and most of the forty-eight American states. "*Zdravo!*" I replied, guiltily, like one who has opened a piggy-bank.

Six days later, from Salonika in the strange and pleasant company of Harry Edward, Negro 1920 Olympic track star now an UNRRA

housing officer in northern Greece, I drove toward the Yugoslav frontier. The history of old suspicions can be read in the barrenness of this borderland: about 20 kilometers from the international line the Greek highway, never tolerable, degenerates into a spine-cracking dirt road cutting over uninhabited swamp, sand, prairie and mountain till you round a crag and see Lake Doirani below. Then you zigzag headily down, swerve off through the center of a high-weeded field and presto! —the frontier, as concealed as an ambush.

The architects of this border never intended to make hobnobbing easy. The Greek goat path which substitutes for a road comes to an absolute finish a few feet short of the line, and the Yugoslav road begins one hundred yards off the other side. In between is a no man's land marked off by opposing parapets and barbed wire. Frontier guards on both sides see each other's familiar faces daily, but fraternization is nil. All carry rifles slung over their shoulders.

The lieutenant in charge of the Greek patrol greeted us cordially, waved aside my exit visa, and helped me scramble over the barbed wire. Edward wanted to get a tourist's look at the Yugoslavs, and the lieutenant had no objection. The two of us strode across the neutral ground in a dead silence, both sides watching. Up ahead, the nearest Yugoslav sentry unslung his rifle. "Better start grinning," I advised Edward. As we approached I yelled "*Komandant?*" at the guard. He jerked a thumb toward the rear, and returned the grin hesitantly. But the young Yugoslav lieutenant who came running up to intercept us as we walked on wasn't grinning at all. "*Dokumenta!*" he snapped. I gave him my stamped passport. He studied it hard, handed it back with a grunt signifying satisfaction. "*Dokumenta!*" he repeated to my companion. Poor Edward tried to explain he'd just come over for the walk and intended to go right back to Greece. When it percolated through to the lieutenant that this foreigner had been allowed to penetrate into Yugoslavia without a scrap of authorization, he went berserk. He stamped his booted feet, waved a fist under Edward's perspiring nose, roared at the unhappy guard who had let us go through. Judging from the din, it seemed the least he contemplated doing was shoot the soldier, or send Edward under arrest to Belgrade, or both. Edward resolved the crisis by grabbing my hand, pumping it ostentatiously, saying goodbye loudly in several languages and then calmly turning around to stroll back to Greece. The lieutenant was too startled by this serenity to react until Edward was well on his way, at which juncture I began chanting "UNRRA, UNRRA" and wiggling an explanatory finger at Edward's disappearing form.

A cheerful young man with a jeep introduced himself as agent for the Macedonian Republic's Ministry of Supply. He indicated that most of his ministry's work consisted of receiving supplies from UNRRA, and he was driving to Skoplje if I wanted a ride. The jeep, he said proudly, also came from UNRRA. My friend, the Partisan lieutenant, still grouchy, piled into the back along with my baggage. I guessed he was merely going off duty, but after 20 kilometers we pulled up at a building marked "Customs" and he invited me out for a recheck of my papers and an inspection of my bags. He rummaged through everything I possessed, with fierce concentration. Was there anything I wasn't supposed to have? I asked. Should I make a declaration? What was he looking for? No, he wasn't looking for anything, nothing was forbidden, he said, but his orders were to inspect all baggage, and so he was inspecting it. This is a minor enigma with which I shall puzzle my descendants.

Reloading the bags and unloading the lieutenant, my Macedonian and I bowled along for a fast four hours to Skoplje. I think we must have passed at least 5,000 German PW's, rebuilding the Skoplje-Djevdjelia railroad which they and the Partisans had once alternated at blowing up. Another sight for meditation was the Yugoslav soldiery—about ten soldiers to every civilian, swarming over the countryside all the way from the frontier up through the Vardar Valley into and beyond Demir Kapu, the historic invasion gate between the overhanging peaks of the Monastir Gap. This was the territory which the Belgrade military, seven months before, had declined to let me visit—and now I could begin to see why. We passed through Veles, just south of Skoplje, at 6 P.M., in time to catch the town square's loudspeaker bursting into thunderous speech—a nostalgic reminder of dear old Belgrade. Another hour, and I was snug and asleep on an iron cot in the Grand Hotel Makedonija, Skoplje's best.

MACEDONIA UNVEILED

UNRRA-man Perry Gangloff was delighted over my arrival and over the energy of the new Yugoslavia. "I'll lend you a jeep and an interpreter," he vowed. "It's about time a correspondent got down here to see how these grand people are working at reconstruction. What enthusiasm! Go out into the country and have a look for yourself."

I certainly saw enthusiasm at the Macedonian Parliament, in session at the handsome *Banovina* built a decade earlier by Macedonia's Serb overlords. The house hummed with the vigor of youth. In the bustling lobby, just before the meeting opened, I was introduced to Lazo Kulishevski, thirty-one-year-old President of the Macedonian Republic,

and Vice-President Ljupcho Arsov, thirty-six. Both rose to high office from the Partisan hills. Even the older members, many of them leather-faced peasants in bumpkin dress, seemed galvanized out of their natural stolidity by the spirit in the air, and stomped and cheered as loudly as the rest at appropriate moments during the various speeches of the day.

We sat up front. On the platform, facing the deputies, was a long table crowded with the ministers of the Macedonian Government. "Which parties do the ministers represent?" I asked the local *Tanyug* correspondent at my elbow. He gazed upon me with round and innocent eyes. "Parties?" he repeated. "We have no parties any more. We just have the People's Front. The old parties supported Belgrade and Serb domination. Their better elements joined the Front. Now they don't need party labels any more."

"And the Communists?" I prodded. "Have they disappeared into the Front too?"

"Certainly not! No reason why *they* should lose their identity. They have their special organization, a big one."

The efficacy of this became abundantly clear when the Finance Minister (Communist) finished reading a report on the budget. A deputy said, "Let's not waste time discussing this," everybody voted aye for the budget, and Parliament proceeded to the next item of business.

Biggest applause went to Tsvetko Uzunovski, Minister of the Interior. "He fought for the Loyalists in Spain," *Tanyug* whispered. "Communist?" I whispered back. "Naturally," the other replied. "Everybody who went to Spain was a Communist." Tsvetko, who controls the police, brought the house down with the announcement that "we have finally liquidated the remnants of reaction except a few who escaped to Greece to join the monarcho-fascists."

Andja Dzuvalakovska, my UNRRA interpreter, a hefty pro-Partisan lady with a delicate hint of mustache, guided me next morning to local OZNA headquarters, where the invincible Pijade signature automatically produced a *propustnitsa* to go anywhere I liked in Yugoslav Macedonia.

During the next two days we made a complete circle around the southwestern quarter of the Republic, encountering Partisan road blocks at the entry and exit of every town, but it is agreeable to report that not once did we lose more than the brisk moment necessary to check my credentials. Except for the heavy military concentrations along the Vardar Valley road which I had already traversed, there was indeed no reason to hinder the correspondent in his self-appointed rounds.

I came away with conflicting impressions. I saw an *individual* acceptance of incredible primitiveness, an indifference to hygiene and diet, which the Revolution had failed to jolt. But on the *community* level I found a driving urge toward achievement, which the Revolution had effectively harnessed.

Pastures fat with cattle, but no butter available for leagues around, because the peasants have never tasted butter, therefore don't want it. Cool lakes silvery with ten thousand fish, but fish in the taverns fried in one great pan every morning and served up, stiff and malodorous, until the following dawn. Plumbing and toilets cautiously invading the few more prosperous peasant cottages, but visitors, and even the elders of the family, still squatting suspiciously out back with the hogs.

Yet I found a whole village marching forth in song to repair a bridge, and near Boletin I came upon a merry company of two hundred men and youths rebuilding the highway on their free Sunday after hiking 15 kilometers during the night over the mountains to get there, without pay and even without food except what they stuffed into a handkerchief at the end of a stick. A common sight on the dusty roads was the Moslem family cart, pulled by a brace of fly-ravaged horses, their master dozing at the reins, his two or half-dozen wives in baggy trousers and untempting veils hunched up on parallel benches behind him like a bus filled with Islamic antiquities. But in Debar the apple-cheeked Zinet Krlija, eighteen, brown-eyed beauty out of the Koran, is chief of the Town Committee's health section. Zinet dresses collegiate; Finet, her mother, still wears a modest veil against the gaze of the home-town males of Debar, but goes open-faced to Belgrade for national conventions of the Anti-fascist Women's League, of which she is regional chairlady. And in Ochrid eleven Moslem brides have taken to themselves Christian husbands, a tradition-shattering merger unthinkable without the encouragement of the militant Partisan doctrine.

BLOOD AND SOIL

Our road to Ochrid bore the unhealed gashes of truck, artillery and tank tread, for this was a main supply route of the Italians and the Germans to Durazzo and the Adriatic. We spent a night in the moribund summer resort on the shores of Lake Ochrid, one of Europe's handsomer picture-postcard vistas. Of three hotels which used to entertain 4,000 visitors each season, only one remained habitable after occupation by Italians, Bulgarians, Germans and Partisans.

We were the first paying guests at the Hotel San Stefano since Liberation a year before. Despite the long-familiar sorrow stamped into her

pallid face and black mourning dress, the landlady retained the trace of a classic Macedonian beauty. The hotel's blankets and linens, she explained, had dwindled and vanished under successive levies by the different "tenants" of recent years, and it was time now to open the chest which she had kept filled, according to peasant rite, for the wedding day of her son. I slept that night in white and virginal sheets once tenderly laid away for the marriage of Stepan Raditch, Partisan lieutenant, killed in the Srem campaign against the Germans during the last days of the war.

A funeral placard tacked to the hotel door displayed a faded photo-portrait, bordered in black, of a man with flashing eyes and bristle-mustache. "That," said Anton Raditch, the father, "was another Stepan Raditch, my oldest brother, dead since 1904. He took his own life while the Turks were preparing him for torture. He was a leader of the patriots. After he died a hero's death, the Serbs said he was a Serb, calling him Raditchevitch, and the Bulgars claimed him as Raditchev, but his name was Raditch, a true Macedonian name, and it was for Macedonia he died."

In sun-baked Bitolj—better known as Monastir to mapmakers and Hellenic irredentists—the previous year's horrendous Yugoslav tales of Greek atrocities took on semblance of truth and continuity from the accounts of persecution poured into my ear by Slavic refugees. Here was a colony of some 2,000 "Aegean Macedonians," children and grown men, young mothers and patriarchs, all fugitives from towns in Greece's portion of ancient Macedonia.

These people were unquestionably authentic; equally fluent in Greek and their own Slavic dialect; natives of Greek places like Florina, which they called Lerin, and Kastoria (Kostorsko). A muscled peasant whose house was burned down as he fled to the mountains; an old woman whose daughter fought with ELAS; a young mother arrested with her three children because her husband was a guerrilla; a white-haired couple distraught for their two sons still in a Salonika jail; a youth with a price of a million drachmas posted for his head by the Greek police. Eight thousand such as these were scattered among the border communities on the Yugoslav side of the frontier, said the leader of the Bitolj group. They were living in Government shelters and subsisting on UNRRA rations.

All told essentially the same story: arrests, beatings, their homes put to the torch because they were Slavs. And all wanted essentially the same thing: to go back to the place where they were born, to rejoin their kinfolk, but as free Macedonians, not as imitation "Greeks."

"In the schools, we were taught only Greek," I was told. "Since 1912 it has been forbidden to say even 'good morning' in our own language." As I listened, it became clear why the Greek nationalists singled these people out for a special drubbing. Because these were not only anti-King but worse—anti-Greek, a hostile minority with ties to a hostile foreign state, an unassimilated element in a convulsed body. Even in the common struggle with their Greek Partisan comrades they had remained apart, in their separate *Slav* guerrilla organization. "For a time," said one of their headmen, "we had hard feelings for EAM. They wanted us to disband SNOF, our Slav National Liberation Front in Greece, and merge with EAM. We refused. We said we would fight alone, if necessary. But now we are allies again. When Greece has an EAM government, they will give us back our country."

I said I could not recall EAM ever having announced any plan to cede the richest provinces of Greece to Yugoslavia. "They have promised," was the stubborn reply. "The bad Greeks in our country will have to go. The few good Greeks, they may stay."

I thought of the "bad Greeks" who, for better or worse, have been rooted into their piece of Macedonia ever since it was torn from the Turks in 1912; I thought of their hatred for all things Slav, especially for the ferocious Bulgarian Slavs who came down to the Aegean behind Hitler's Army; I thought, too, of the passionate nationalism of Greeks everywhere in Greece, their cult of frontier sanctity. For these Slavic Macedonians, therefore, with their equally intense hatred of all things Hellenic and with their childlike faith in an impossible pledge, I knew that, whatever else transpired, there could be no peace, because neither charity nor tolerance existed on either side, and without them nothing could heal the wound.

THE PORTER AND THE COMMISSAR

The overnight train from Skopje to Belgrade ran through a jungle of rusted iron. Mile after mile on both sides of the track, until the black night wiped them out, I stared at the scorched and twisted carcasses of freightcars, sleepingcars and coaches, still lying where they had been derailed or burned by the retreating *Wehrmacht*.

"We've collected everything that could still be used, and we've put it back to work," said the *wagon-lit* porter, proudly. "But the Germans destroyed so much. It will take a long time."

This porter, like all of his colleagues I've ever known, was as international as his international *wagon-lit* company, fluent in many languages, wise and cosmopolitan, much above his mission in life: the collecting of passports, the making of beds, the fetching of bottles of Vichy

water. "I am a Slav from Trieste," he said, "but that was long ago. Before the first war, Trieste was Austrian. They made me a soldier in Franz Joseph's army. Afterward, Trieste became Italian. I escaped when the Blackshirts came for me. Mussolini's gang was killing right and left, to make Trieste pure Italian. For twenty years I went back and forth between Paris and Istanbul. None of the countries was fit to live in, but a few nights in each—it was endurable. . . . Yugoslavia? They are working hard here. You can see how much has to be done. It's the young people, especially. They give their labor for nothing. From them it's easy to get work: just start them marching, and teach them a song. But I give my labor too, when I can. I don't need songs. And I'm not a Communist. But, after all, I am a Yugoslav. To restore my country, that is a good thing, whatever the politics. . . ."

The man sharing my sleeping compartment wore the gold stripes and stars of a lieutenant colonel on his sleeve. He was a political commissar, twenty-five years old. After the civilities had cracked the top skin of ice, I asked him about the commissars' duties. "We teach the troops how to think politically." The Colonel was very young for his rank and responsibilities, was he not? "Three years in the mountains are long enough to show if a man knows how to lead other men." But the instruction of soldiers—did that not require special preparation of the instructor? What was the Colonel's educational background? "Four years in an elementary school," he said dryly. "I was born in a Macedonian village. My real university was the war. One learns all one needs to know about fascism when one kills Germans and Chetniks. When Hitler invaded, the educated officers deserted the Army. Comrade Tito had no time to send us to school." And now? "Oh yes, soon I shall be given furlough. I'll spend six months studying history and political science in the Officers' Academy." What did a political commissar teach the troops? "That the function of the Army is to defend the country against fascist invasion, that Russia and the People's Front are the guardians of the People's democracy, that fascism and reaction are in the shadows now but not yet in the grave. . . ." And England and America? What do the soldiers learn about them? "Why, we teach that they were our Allies in our struggle for national liberation." But what about now? "The Army is impartial in such matters. We encourage the soldiers to read and understand what is printed about these things in the Yugoslav newspapers. . . ."

TITOLITARIANISM, SECOND PHASE

Life, at first glance, seemed *in statu quo* in Belgrade. *Gospodin Tomashitch* was still holding down the reception desk at the Moskva.

The bedbugs were still on the second floor but not on the first. The same pictures of Tito and Stalin stared from the shop windows, the same exhortations to *shivio* huzzahed in whitewash and electric light. There was a third newspaper in the capital now, something called *Glas* ("Voice")—the "voice" of the People's Front, dominated by Tito, therefore adding nothing except an echo of the other two papers, both of them pro-Communist.

OWI had transformed itself into USIS—United States Information Service—with no better results in Yugoslav press column space. When I checked in with the new USIS chief, Dick Breese, he was spluttering with outrage over a snub just administered to an ex-President of the United States. No high Yugoslav official, no one of even cabinet rank, had turned up at Zemun Airport to greet Herbert Hoover, junketing around Europe on a survey of relief problems. The USIS advance release about the Hoover mission had been spiked by every editor; his entire visit to Yugoslavia netted a few lines on page three of *Politika* and *Borba*. Breese, like his predecessors, was existing in a perpetual state of frustration.

The one big outward change in the Belgrade scene was the absence of uniformed Russians, for the Red Army, finding its presence in bulk no longer required in friendly Yugoslavia, had gone home. Otherwise, Tito was comfortably in his heaven, and all looked as usual in the Partisan world.

But not really. During my absence the Revolution had been elbowing its way along.

For one thing, Ivan Subasitch was gone—Subasitch, Premier of the London Government-in-Exile, who had brought his moderate colleagues into a coalition government with the Partisans on Tito's promise of free elections—the so-called Tito-Subasitch Pact. In the end, Subasitch had quit the coalition, later than the prophetic Milan Grol, but for the same desperate reasons.

Meanwhile the electoral laws, whose passage I had watched in the *Skupshтина*, had been put to the cold test of practical politics. Advertised by the Partisans as a model of democratic legislation, the laws had proved themselves so convenient a text for the smothering of all legitimate competition that the Opposition had finally given up hope of even running a candidate. Grol, Subasitch and their friends had simply quit, announcing a total boycott of the elections.

The law guaranteeing freedom of the press had worked out the same way. Its resonant phrases about liberty were choked off as soon as three Opposition newspapers put in their appearance.

Milan Grol's weekly, *Demokracija*, lasted the longest—seven weeks. In the beginning, Government action was entirely informal: dealers and newsboys handling the paper were simply beaten up by Partisan musclemen. This did not prevent the paper from developing a large circulation. The seventh issue carried an editorial charging that the Army and public schools were Communist-dominated and demanding that they be neutralized. The Government swooped down and confiscated all copies, on grounds that the editorial was dangerous and inflammatory, therefore prohibitable under the terms of the democratic press law. (This was the week before elections.) The eighth issue did not appear at all, because the Government-controlled compositors' union "struck" and refused to set an article complaining about Partisan domination of unions. That was the end of *Demokracija*.

In Zagreb, *Glas Naroda* ("Voice of the People") lasted for one edition. Its editor was none other than Mme. Stepan Raditch, widow of the great Croat peasant leader martyred during the old regime (and no relation to my Macedonian hotelkeeper). After the first issue, a bomb exploded in her bookshop. The second issue was stopped by another printers' "strike" and, to make sure, the Government suppressed the paper officially.

Finally, the independent Serb journal *Novosti* ("News") came tumbling down when its third issue published some embarrassing statistics about the official vote count in the elections. Using the Government's own figures, *Novosti* convincingly showed that the Partisans' majority was about 23 per cent less than the 88.6 per cent officially claimed. After that, a sudden "newsprint shortage" forced the paper out of business.

As for the elections themselves, with nobody except Government candidates in the contest, the result had been inevitably a 100-per-cent People's-Front Constituent Assembly. This in turn had produced a new State—the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia—and voted the monarchy out of existence by acclamation. Tito was now the "constitutional" Premier of a solid People's-Front cabinet responsible to an "elected" Parliament packed with Communists and splinter-group stooges.

Mihailovitch, once considered the biggest single threat to the regime, was fattening up for trial in a Partisan cell after being discovered—hungry, sick and with only two or three followers—in a Bosnian cave.

The Opposition was dispersed, voiceless, scared stiff.

Cloaked at last in the toga of "legality," the Partisans could now move openly and with boldness, no longer dependent on clouds of heroic language to obscure their true designs.

"I have become a dangerous, unreasonable man," one bitter Serb confided to me. "The last time you were here, I was angry and alarmed, but I still had faith in the possibilities of peaceful and democratic resistance. Well, I am no longer a philosopher now. I am no longer a democrat. I am quite capable of cutting Partisan throats with my own knife if I ever have the chance." He clenched and unclenched his fist. "But will I ever get the chance? The Opposition is finished, at least in the predictable future. Our only salvation is the West. Unless you interfere, Yugoslavia is lost."

The Partisans were now showing their hostility toward the British and Americans much more openly than they had dared during the salad period of "non-legality."

The Trepcha case was typical of Partisan tactics on the economic front. The lead, zinc and silver Trepcha mines were supposed to be under the temporary management of the Partisans pending a nationalization settlement with the British owners. But meanwhile the diggings were being operated at fever speed, which was exhausting the mines' potential without any regard for scientific exploitation or British protests....

Belgrade police broke the locks and drove away the American jeeps parked outside the American Embassy because the vehicles were "traffic hazards." When we protested, the responsible police official made a mock show of resigning—and was immediately promoted to a higher post....

A Yugoslav stringer in the Associated Press bureau was jailed incommunicado on charges of treasonable contacts with anti-Partisans in Trieste. Also in jail were two Yugoslav employees of the American Embassy. Harold Shantz, our chargé d'affaires, had for his neighbor no less a personage than the fearsome General Alexander Rankovitch, Interior Minister, whose perpetual sentry noted every arrival and departure next door....

At Zemun Airport, Major Joseph Gurley was struggling along as sole survivor of our Air Transport Command contingent. The Yugoslavs refused to permit replacements for men who had been demobilized on "points" and gone home. Gurley was liaison section and ground crew, weather officer, radio operator and baggage center, all by himself. He had already had several brushes with OZNA vigilantes at the airport. Once they poked a tommygun at him when he tried to move a few pieces of American technical equipment from his office to a plane. They claimed it was material due them as lend-lease. On another occa-

sion the doughty Major had to apply an axe to American radio apparatus to keep it from Partisan confiscation....

In short, the "One World" idea linking Yugoslavia and the West was taking quite a beating, on the Partisans' home grounds.

RENEGADE'S RETURN

It was in this climate of mutual adoration that I made the customary ceremonial call at the Information Ministry on my second day back in Belgrade. My old friend Korach, the Assistant Minister, had gone on to higher things. Now serving as the Ministry's director for foreign affairs was Jovan Vuksan, a graduate from OZNA, abetted by one Vladimir Baum, a fresh-vintage Partisan who, having sat out the war as an inglorious refugee in Italy, had since been outzealing the zealots in order to prove his revolutionary faith.

I am not the type for dramatic entrances. There is nothing flashing in my eye, nor do I have anything striking in my carriage when I bring it inside a room. But this time I outdid Garbo, without any effort at all. Upon beholding me, Vuksan-Baum dropped their jaws, and not a sound or creature stirred in the heavy-breathing chamber.

"How did *you* get here?" Vuksan finally managed to gasp.

"From Greece," said I, in my great innocence. "And how are you?"

The guardians of the printed word visibly pulled themselves out of their mental tailspin. An unsuccessful imitation of a leer broke upon the Vuksan countenance: "We are very glad to see the objective Mr. Lehrman again. Aren't we, *Drug* Baum?"

"Ah, yes," that worthy smirked, "the impartial correspondent who gets his information from coffeehouses."

There followed a lively quarter-hour in which Vuksan-Baum commented further on my "objectivity" and I inquired whether a reporter could achieve such a state only by constant ecstasy before the Partisan shrine. After both sides simmered down, I said I would be obliged to the two caretakers of the foreign press if they would arrange interviews for me with certain Government officials, since I had returned to Belgrade in order to catch up on the progress made by the Partisan regime. This they promised to do. (Thereafter, I telephoned them daily, each time to be assured that everything possible was being done but that the people on my list were busy, ill or out of town.)

Bemused by this cruder-than-usual reception, I went down the street to see Leo Hochstetter, UNRRA public relations chief. Leo had telegraphed to Athens inviting me on an UNRRA inspection trip along with fourteen foreign correspondents from Rome and Vienna.

"I heard you'd arrived," Leo said. "Funny thing happened this

morning. I was over at the Foreign Trade Ministry checking the list of guys for this UNRRA junket, and the feller says everybody's cleared for a visa except Lehrman. What's the matter with Lehrman? I ask. It says here, says this official, squinting at a piece of paper, that we aren't letting him into the country. Why, hell, says I, he's *in* the country! Oh well, says the other feller, in that case I guess this must be a typographical error. . . . Now waddaya make of that?"

On my way back to the Moskva the last layer of mystery was rolled back when I encountered T——, one of my local Yugoslav press acquaintances from earlier, gayer days. His jaw dropped too. He tried to duck away into the crowd, but I grasped him by the sleeve and demanded to know wottinhell was wrong with everybody. He stuttered that he would send me something within the hour which would explain all, if only I would let him go before he was detected in my baneful company.

What he sent me was a newspaper clipping. It was Page One of *Politika*, the Government organ, dated October 13th—about five weeks after I had left Belgrade the year before.

There are five columns on a page of *Politika*. The two left-hand columns of this particular issue carried a photo of Tito, a declaration by Tito, and two news items about Tito. The rest of Page One—the whole of the three lead columns on the right—was covered with the main piece of the day: an attack on the reactionary writings of one Hal Lehrman.

From the *Politika* blast nobody could possibly guess that I had ever filed a line of anything except blackest calumny about the Partisan regime. No hint was made of the dozen or more pieces where, in my newness and dogged enthusiasm, I had saluted one or another apparent miracle of the Revolution. *Politika's* vials of wrath were dumped exclusively on my final message from Belgrade, the one in which I had at last cabled, carefully and with qualification, my qualms about the Partisan experiment. Because of this defection, *Politika* denounced me for "running to the police and intervening" in favor of traitors, for sending "expensive cables" filled with "false charges of crimes"; in short, for being a most monstrous enemy of democracy. It was now quite clear that the Information Ministry, to which any request from abroad for my re-entry would normally have gone, had rigid orders to keep me from ever again setting foot on Yugoslavia soil.

MAY DAY

Belgrade bloomed in color like a peasant bride. Flowers garlanded the portraits of the mighty. Exotic little oriental rugs hung festively

from windows and balconies. Red stars and *zhivio* flickered in neon lights, bigger and brighter than ever. On the main corner of Terazije, between the Moskva and the Hotel Balkan, carpenters hammered for days at the grandstand where Tito would review the May Day parade. Soldiers, their tommyguns at the ready, circled the scaffolding, eyes peeled for any citizens who might be inclined to roll a time bomb under the platform where the Marshal would later take the salutes of his loving people.

At six o'clock on May Day morning a rifle butt pounded on my door (and on all other doors in the Moskva). Two Partisan soldiers stomped in, like minor characters in a Grade B picture about the Gestapo. They poked through the closets, under the beds, into the bathroom. Then they shut the big windows fronting on the street, where the parade would pass. From 7 A.M. on, nobody could enter or leave the hotel. The parade began at 9, lasted until 1:30 in the afternoon. Tito and his grandstand were totally invisible around the corner, but the windows remained closed and the tommyguns stood vigilant until the end.

This entire operation was executed without apology or conversation. The only concession to civility was that friends wandering into my room from rear parts of the hotel were allowed to press their noses against the windowpanes and squint at the procession below.

The parade consisted of a long series of floats representing different ministries and Government departments, sandwiched between marching columns of civil servants, factory workers, and labor delegations from the provinces. Every ten yards or so, a team of marchers sweated beneath a giant placard bearing a slogan culled from the approved list of May Day slogans. (This list had appeared in the press a few days earlier—under a Moscow date line.) At intervals of three or four minutes, a cheerleader in each section would start up a *zhivio* for somebody or something, and the rest would respond. For one block before and one block after the grandstand, the pavements were bare, no spectators being allowed so close to the Presence. As each clump of marchers arrived where the Marshal stood, a frenzied chant of "Tee-Toh! Tee-Toh!" broke forth to lull and soothe him. It was all very edifying and spontaneous.

That evening, a newsreel of the morning's parade was shown on a great screen stuck up on Tito's grandstand. Terazije was alive with thousands of white faces, closely packed and blinking upward. Gazing from my balcony upon this dreary sea, I thought that Mussolini would surely have felt at home on a balcony such as this if he could have

jutted out his chin and beheld the worshippers in Terazije instead of the worshippers in the Piazza Venezia.

VOYAGE THROUGH TITOLAND

Our seven-day journey to Austrianized Croatia, the Italianate coast of Adriatic Dalmatia, the minareted wilderness of Turkified Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the Yugoslav cradle of lower Serbia produced rich and intimate data for an understanding of the variegated South Slavs and their tumultuous destinies. We traveled the different stages by train, jeep, staff car and boat, getting close-ups instead of a flat aerial view. We could read, in the smashed stone and the torn flesh, the incredible devastation of the war, foreign and internecine. We measured for ourselves the fierce energy of Yugoslavia's reconstruction. UNRRA wanted us to note the mighty contribution made by international good will to the restoration of the land and the people. This contribution was vastly evident everywhere; we noted, too, that very few Yugoslavs knew they were indebted for this to the democratic West and not to the Partisan regime.

These matters fit better into Chapter 6. Here I want only to stop long enough to recapture some characteristic sights and sounds.

—The village of Korenica is a Serbian enclave in the Croatian hinterland south of Zagreb. Fifteen ragged boys were clambering over the skeleton ruins of burned-out peasant houses when our motorcade stopped there. We asked the boys how many of them had lost their fathers in the war. They all raised their hands.

—The land was a giant billboard for Partisan slogans. "*Hurrah for the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia*" or "*Long Live the Labor of the Yugoslav Peoples*" or "*Dig for the Yugoslav Harvest*" or "*Build the People's Bridges*" thundered from every wall. Exhortations screamed at us from the unlikeliest places. In the quiet garden of a Franciscan monastery on the Adriatic island of Hvar stood a majestic 400-year-old oak, inspiring in its tranquillity—except for a poster tacked to the trunk, depicting a Partisan youth, his face contorted with fervor, his arms outstretched, his body lunging forward, his hands clutching a pickax and a rifle.... In Mostar, Herzegovina's capital, where women go veiled and men smoke their *hookahs* in every doorway, the Red Star of the Revolution was stuck in electric lights atop the mosque, and far across the valley we could read "*TITO*" in characters 50 feet high along the side of a mountain.

—"*Hurrah for the Communist Party of Yugoslavia*," it said on a sign over the gate of the State-owned cotton mill outside Zagreb. "Who put that up?" I asked. "Is every worker here a Communist?"

Our guide, an official of the Croatian Ministry of Industries, shifted uneasily for a moment, then brightened: "Some of the workers belong to no party. But everybody knows the Communist Party is the only one interested in the workers' welfare." We passed through an undecorated alley and into the mill. When we emerged after a half-hour's inspection, the alley was miraculously cluttered with pennants, banners and placards of assorted pro-Government parties, stacked helter-skelter against the walls. "You see," said the Ministry's representative, happily, "we have free speech here."

—Because the UNRRA tour was under Government sponsorship, none of us could take along his own interpreter. We had to rely on official intermediaries for conversation with the local populations. The canny peasants understood this, and made safe conversation. But the Yugoslav countryside is peppered with speakers of English—many of them rugged ancients who emigrated to America and Canada, earned their "fortune" in road-building or coal-digging, and then came home to the old country to invest in a piece of native land. Every village seemed to have at least one of them. Wherever I met him, or a rare provincial with a smattering of French or German, I tried to lure him away from the *mêlée* of the roadside communal press conference and get him to talk. This worked about one time out of three. If he talked, it boiled down to something like this: "It's no good here, Mister. Like big jail. Couple people holler *zhivio*; everybody else do de work, keep mouth shut." Then he would turn me around and walk me back, asking loudly, "You know my son John in Pittsburgh, maybe?"...

—On one Croatian highway we blundered into army maneuvers. Our motorcade was held up for an hour, waiting for thirty-five Russian-built tanks to rumble by. Then we were ordered to drive along speedily. Each car had to take on a soldier, presumably to get us through the sentries without further delay but really to prevent any of the photographers in the group from trying to flick a lens open. We passed a solid two miles of parked 3-ton trucks and weapons carriers, made in the U.S. and Canada. These were filled with troops or attached to artillery, light, medium and heavy. The vehicles were the same type as 10,000 trucks donated by UNRRA for transport of *civilian* food and supplies. "I once tried to check the registration numbers on some of the Army's Dodge trucks," said Len Bradbury, a British member of the UNRRA office for Croatia. "Thought I'd compare them with numbers on our list of the trucks we've handed over to relieve the food shortage. But OZNA picked me up before I could properly get started. They were rather grim, as if they'd caught an

enemy spy. Grilled me for six hours, trying to make me say which foreign power I was snooping for."

There were a lot of horses around, too, several thousands of them, carrying Partisan cavalymen. Horses were another item which UNRRA imported in large quantities when the Yugoslav Government pleaded for help in the acute crisis of draft animals for farming. . . .

TEMPEST IN THE PARTISAN TEAPOT

We cut our trip short and spent the last day driving for eleven hours across Serbia because the authorities in Belgrade were cordially beseeching us to be back in the capital in time for the May 9th military demonstration commemorating the first anniversary of V-E Day. Promptly upon our arrival we found a fresh crisis, this time with myself in the middle of it.

Tickets were issued to the press section of the grandstand on Kralja Aleksandra Boulevard, where the Victory Parade would pass. Invitations were also handed out for a Victory Soirée at Tito's residence. I was left out of both distributions. So was Ann Dacie, correspondent of *The New Statesman*. It was in that journal that the British version of my offending article about the Partisans, the one which invoked *Politika's* fury, had been published eight months earlier. Since then, *The New Statesman* had been repentently pro-Partisan, and Ann Dacie herself had been a model of Socialist decorum. But Vuksan-Baum had not forgotten, and vengeance was at last at hand.

We congregated for breakfast at the Majestic on May 9th morning. Our host, Leo Hochstetter, was the spearhead of attack on Partisan fatheadedness. Dacie and I, he said, were guests of UNRRA. As chief of UNRRA public relations, he'd be goddammed if he would stand by and let the Partisans pick and choose which of his guests could go to the parade and which couldn't. And what about the free speech the Partisans were always boasting about? Leo demanded to know. Were the foreign correspondents going to watch two of their colleagues get pushed around because their papers had published an article a year ago which, right or wrong, found something rotten in the state of Yugoslavia?

Leo's eloquence overpowered everybody except the correspondent of *Tass*, the Soviet news agency. The rest decided to go on strike. And strike they did. Up on Kralja Aleksandra, the drums and caissons rolled, but in the Hotel Moskva the foreign press reclined manfully at its ease. "Sure, this reminds me of the toime the Rooshins gave me in Djurmany," said the AP's one hundred-per-cent Irish photographer,

Jim Pringle. "They were after keepin' me fram the Rooshin zone and all the ither correspondents refused to go in so long as I was out. It took two months before the Rooshins broke the stroike by admittin' 'twas all a mistake."

This time victory came in just one hour. The Yugoslav military, which was managing the parade, suddenly noticed the hole in the grandstand where the world press was supposed to be. Partisan pride and power were unfolding, and none to carry the tidings. The Vuksan-Baum ban was instantaneously rescinded. Three sleek staff cars, each driven by a colonel, roared up to the Moskva. We were all ceremoniously poured in and raced across town, sirens wailing, to a point of admirable vantage directly opposite the main reviewing stand, where we could enjoy an intimate, uninterrupted view of Tito, the People's Choice, resplendent in his fourteen stars, sashes, crosses and medals on a new, natty blue uniform of his own design.

The men and metal rattling down the broad boulevard, except for the somewhat bedraggled infantry, gleamed with spit and polish. Airplanes zipped and zoomed overhead as the tanks and big guns and ack-ack batteries and armored cars crunched by. It was a most impressive display—no comic-opera Balkan army but a first-class little fighting force, and not too little at that. Some of the equipment was war booty—old German and Italian stock; but I saw many American and British pieces, and more Russian. "Poverty and parades," muttered Percy Wadsworth, of the Kemsley Press, during a few bars of silence between the bugle blasts. Thinking of the hunger and general misery we had just inspected in the provinces, we couldn't help wondering why the victorious Partisans needed so many men in uniform who could be out on the land making things grow.

Lunchtime the correspondents met again at the Majestic. Baum turned up, belligerently, to inquire whether the company intended to boycott the Marshal's reception that evening also, because if they did he could promise them the Press Department had control of the situation and there would be no yielding. This implied that the military authorities had been guilty of unpardonable weakness about the parade.

At the suggestion of the *Chicago Times'* Jim Wellard, we adjourned to an upstairs salon. Baum was politely solicited to explain exactly what he had against Ann Dacie and me. At first he refused to discuss the matter. He drew himself up to his full five feet four and announced that the Yugoslav Government was not in the habit of justifying the selection of its guests or meeting "conditions" for acceptance of its invitations. But the boys quickly took him off that by

gently murmuring that they were operating as good trade unionists, trying to assess a complaint from fellow workers about being locked out, and surely the Partisan regime couldn't object to a labor committee!

Baffled by this turn, Baum burst into a long tirade against me, the gist of which was that I had written "many articles, some of them from outside the country, which were disloyal to the Yugoslav Government." The more he talked, the angrier he got, until everybody was pretty sick of him. (Later the Dutch correspondent in the party, whose name I forget, told me he hadn't fully understood the dismal workings of the Partisan mind until he heard the Baum lecture and its total negation of elementary tolerance.)

It was easy, when my turn came, to crush the unhappy Baum by pointing out that, of all the dispatches I had written during my previous visit, only one was antagonistic to the Partisans; that I had never filed a word about Yugoslavia except from Yugoslavia; that I wasn't aware I owed loyalty to any foreign State.

The meeting then asked Baum kindly to step outside while the correspondents discussed what action to take. The representative of the Yugoslav Government was so startled by the effrontery of this request from a bunch of mere newspapermen that he was outside before he could think up a good answer.

In the discussion which followed his exit, the point was made that Tito's *soirée* *could* be classified as a private party instead of a public event like a parade. In that case, staging another "strike" because somebody had not been invited might be construed as mere social impertinence. More important, the Marshal might get sore and cancel a press conference scheduled for the second morning after, a development none of us, including myself, desired. Everybody finally agreed that each correspondent would go to the reception, or stay away from it, as he pleased; that unless the Tito press conference was open to all nobody would go to it; and that the foreign press corps unanimously condemned the Government's attempt to control any newspaperman's opinions by interfering with his freedom to work. This done, Baum was recalled, the verdict was rendered, and court adjourned.

The cause of free speech enjoyed another minor triumph in alien Belgrade that day. A Czechoslovak delegation was in town to sign a treaty of alliance with Yugoslavia. Premier Zdenek Fierlinger and Foreign Minister Jan Masaryk were meeting the press after the signing ceremonies. Vuksan-Baum could hardly bar anybody from this

purely Czechoslovak affair, so I went along with the other correspondents to the conference, at the Prime Ministry.

When Masaryk entered the room, he looked around for a familiar face. Unluckily for Vuksan-Baum, the only face that the Foreign Minister of Czechoslovakia recognized in that room filled with fifty local and foreign newspapermen was mine. I had seen a great deal of him during the dark years after Munich. Masaryk greeted me by name and innocently shook my hand before walking to his chair. The countenances of Vuksan-Baum turned sweaty, and the rest of the assemblage grinned, for by this time the *Affaire Lehrman* had made the rounds of the city.

After the conference closed, Masaryk, still innocent, got up and stretched, and called out: "Let's you and me have a drink soon, Hal. When the devil are you goin' to visit us in Prague?" (Masaryk's genius for nondiplomatic language and informality is renowned across Europe.) Then he came up to where I stood and proceeded to urge me in a strong voice not to miss seeing Czechoslovakia before returning to the States.

There was a pregnant hush in the room. I whispered: "I'm in the doghouse here, Boss. The Yugoslavs have just finished telling me I'm an enemy of the people. You're risking your reputation, talking to me."

"Tish, tush," said the Foreign Minister, and, putting an arm around my shoulder, engaged me in animated conversation for five minutes.

Flash bulbs popped in our faces as Pringle, *Life's* Nat Farbman, Leo Stoecker of *Acme* and even an intrepid Yugoslav photographer took pictures of the extraordinary scene. A great buzzing arose on all sides, as might have arisen at a nineteenth century court ball if royalty had made a public pass at a suffragette. It was a sad, most anguished hour for Vuksan-Baum.

Early next day I went to the *Skupshchina* in a last attempt to see Moshe Pijade. Previous efforts by telephone to secure an appointment, since the parade incident, had been frustrated by assurances at the other end that "the Comrade Vice-President is not at his desk." This time I muttered "Pijade" at the various guards and barged determinedly down the marble corridor toward his office as if he were my uncle.

I am sorry now that I went. If I hadn't, I might still today have retained a last sentimental tie to the Partisan regime which once, in the freshness of my first arrival, I had sincerely esteemed.

As I pushed open the door to his secretary's office, I caught the dean of the Yugoslav Communist Party flat-footed in the middle of the

room. He flushed. "I have nothing to say to you," he said. He turned on his heel—and stood there.

"But," I stammered, "Your Excellency, I hoped—I mean, I wanted to ask you—surely *you* can see that—"

He swung around and brushed past me to the door of his own office. "I tell you I have nothing to—this matter is very—I am very busy," he said. He fiddled with his eyeglasses. I had the grotesque thought he was as unhappy as I was. I felt like an erring child before a parent unwilling but obliged to spank it.

"But why—" I started again.

The old man grabbed a handful of documents from his desk. He stood for a moment, irresolute in the doorway, then walked around me toward the corridor. I turned after him, wordlessly.

He stopped again. A nervous glance at the big clock over the head of his secretary, who pretended to be lost in her work.

"I must go now," he said, blinking at the floor. "A meeting—I am late. You shouldn't have—you were like the rest; you—"

"Your Excellency, don't you remember, before I left, I told you—."

"I know, but— Enough. I have to go. Goodbye, and—and—good-bye."

Even Pijade, the wise and enlightened Pijade. . . .

Steve Clissold, the British press attaché, gave Ann Dacie and me lunch. "I wanted to have you two culprits to myself," he said. "You know, I really belong to your club. Vuksan thinks I'm a secret agent. He's sure Ann makes reports to me regularly."

"I think they're trying to badger me out of the country," Ann smiled at me. She was a wispy little bit of a thing, who always looked frightened but really wasn't. In fact she was pretty swell. Any one else might have resented all the trouble I had unwittingly caused her. She said: "The telephone rang at my flat all last night. When I picked it up, they clicked off. Must be a new kind of your American third degree."

The next night, Ann's telephone rang no more. Harold Shantz and G. L. Clutton, the American and British chargés d'affaires, had made a joint protest in our behalf to General Velebit, the Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs.

"We ganged up on him in a corner at the Tito reception," Shantz told me. "We said our people wouldn't understand a freedom for the press which included the policy of insulting and impeding correspondents who report what they see if what they see is disagreeable to the regime. Poor Velebit was quite embarrassed. He apologized."

Called the whole thing a stupid mistake on the part of the Information Ministry. Yep, those were his exact words... 'a stupid mistake.' Begged us to say no more about it. He promised to get the ban on you rescinded. From now on, no more discrimination. He guarantees it."

The first test of the new liberalism was the Tito press conference. By arrangement, we all met at Hochstetter's office in the UNRRA building a half-hour before the conference was due to begin at the Prime Ministry. The idea was to see whether any names would be omitted from the list of invited correspondents which Vuksan-Baum were to send over to Leo. No list ever arrived. At 11 A.M. sharp, the telephone on Hochstetter's desk tinkled. He listened for a moment, smiled and hung up.

"The show's over, boys," he said. "The Marshal has taken a powder. That was Tito's secretariat. According to them, the Marshal 'is not in Belgrade this morning.' No conference..."

EXIT FINALE

I didn't stay to find out who would win, Velebit in the Foreign Office or the Vuksan-Baum combination in the Information Ministry.* My Russian clearance papers for Bulgaria were running out, and there was no point in jeopardizing my long-delayed trip to Sofia. The problem, in fact, was how to get my exit permit from Yugoslavia without making the normal application through Vuksan-Baum, who could be ornery enough to stymie it for a week, just to be nasty, if I showed I was in a hurry.

Fortunately, Yugoslavia being a federation of republics now, and the Republic of Serbia having a common frontier with Bulgaria, an alternate way of getting out of Yugoslavia was by application to the visa section of the Serbian Interior Ministry. A surly, chain-smoking *drugaritsa* in a hairnet and mannish clothes made me sign numerous forms, through which I was guided by a *dragoman* from the Embassy, but finally it was done and the lady bureaucrat, all unknowingly, delivered up my passport with the necessary stamps and scrawls therein inscribed. Twenty-four hours after the canceled Tito press conference, I was heading north in an UNRRA car toward Nish, to catch the late train for the Bulgarian border.

The prospects of my early return to Belgrade not being notably bright, my last conversation in the Yugoslav capital that morning

* Some months later, Ann Dacie's visa mysteriously "expired." She was invited to leave Yugoslavia, and did.

has a special symbolism for me still. It was with a waiter at breakfast in the Moskva's *kafana*.

"Are you a journalist?" he asked. "Then I hope you will write the truth about this country."

"And what is the truth?"

"That it is bitter to be alive here, Sir, bitter. When Tito came, 85 per cent of the people were for him. Now, 95 per cent are against him."

"The workers too?"

"The workers especially. For what should we be happy? Our jobs? We are slaves to our jobs. We work where they put us, as long as they tell us. Our wages? Who can live on such wages? They make us shout *zhivio* for Tito and Stalin. What do we get from Russia? Guns. Nothing but guns. When we get shoes, they thank Stalin, but we know, we know where they really come from—from America. . . ."

My uniform caused a small sensation at Nish. The place had been a Bulgarian occupation headquarters during the war. It was pounded by American bombers, and dust from the uncleared wreckage still swirled in clouds over the flat city. But the crowds that followed me around the station while I waited for the train were unanimously friendly. Many of these people—and all the porters, it seemed—had been prisoners in Germany, liberated by the Americans. The relative bliss of the temporary American DP camps was something they would never cease recalling.

A young woman speaking American English with a strong accent explained she had lived fifteen years in New York, then come home to marry. Her husband was killed by the Germans. "How can I get back?" she pleaded. "What's the matter with the new Yugoslavia?" I shrugged. She stared. "Are you kidding?" she said in perfect Brooklynese.

The wheels rattled and bumped through the twilight. We stopped at every village. Peasant women got off and trudged chattering homeward into the falling night, the bright colors fading from their gay aprons over skirts bunched at the waist to accentuate the curve.

In the dim corridor, someone tapped on the glass door of my compartment, and came diffidently in at my nod. We leaned on the open window together, watching the dark fields roll by. After a while he said: "Going to Bulgaria?"

"Yes, and you?"

"I work for the railroad. Engine inspector. I get off soon. But I hear often about Bulgaria. They say it's a little better there than here."

A pause. Then he said: "But not much. Same system, but not so far advanced, because Bulgaria was an Axis country. The democracies still have something to say there. A strange finish to a good war, isn't it?"

Last stop was Tsaribrod, near the frontier, where the "express" for Bulgaria would be ready in two hours. I supped with a train engineer. He was killing time in the dingy but warm station *kafana* on his night off. He contributed the *Spritzer*, I the tinned American cheese.

He had a family of eight, living in two rooms. "We Serbs are used to that," he said when I shook my head sympathetically. "Serbia has always been poor. Still, life is a little easier now. I don't mean because my wages have gone up; prices have gone up more. But at least we get some UNRRA rations now, cheap. That is something to be thankful for."

Something, but not enough, I thought, as I sat packed between two sleeping Russian soldiers, rocking back and forth on the noisy track to Sofia. In my fourteen complicated Yugoslav weeks, I had found little reason to lament the passing of the old kingdom of the South Slavs. Its iniquities had been many, and the need for drastic change compelling—nothing less, indeed, than a clean sweep and a fresh start.

When Tito and his Partisans first arrived in liberated Belgrade, a broad highway of almost limitless reform had lain beckoning before them. The evils of the old regime were fresh in memory. The common man wanted something new. He didn't quite know what he wanted, but he knew vaguely it ought to be something better than the social injustice, racial hatred, individual indignity of the past. In his blurry manner, he groped toward a bit of freedom, a society in which a man could stand up whole, speak his mind, and earn his bread in peace.

Tito represented this vision. That was why the people of Yugoslavia found the strength to persevere through three bloody years to victory. The masses who followed Tito fought for freedom. Tito had promised them a beginning to liberty, under a reformed monarchy or in a republic, whichever the Southern Slavs desired. His opportunities for healthy reconstruction were great and manifold. The world waited benevolently to see what he would do with them.

6

The New Order

The sour cream of the Yugoslav jest is the lively contrast between Partisan declaration and Partisan performance.

If you compare what Tito promised the Yugoslav people with what Tito gave them, the conclusion is inescapable that the Marshal, like Talleyrand's diplomat, used words in order to conceal thought.

Some time after news of the shenanigans in Yugoslavia and adjacent territories in the brave new One World began trickling westward, it became fashionable in America to explain disturbing facts away by blaming them on *our* inability to understand the "mentality" and the "vocabulary" over there. Well, maybe it isn't right to judge other people pedantically by our own vague definitions of "justice," "democracy," and so on. But some standards, such as the well-worn ban on stealing pennies from blind men, are universal rather than geographical rules of behavior. At least, they ought to be.

An Old-Testament stylist could find an apt theme, and an occasion for sonorous Biblical prose, in the Parable of the Uniforms and the Palaces.

In the beginning, Tito was a humble patriot who lived in a cave. When a British mission parachuted into the Yugoslav hills in 1943, it found the Partisan leader wearing a tired business suit. Later in the war, he donned a Soviet-made uniform "airmailed" to him from Moscow, but it was a quiet gray-green, without trimmings. Only the laurel leaves on lapels and cuffs showed he was supreme commander. He wore ordinary boots, wrinkled and creaking.

Arriving at last in Belgrade, the Marshal needed a new uniform for the threadbare one from Russia. He requisitioned the services of the old Serb Court's tailors. And in a very short space of time, the Marshal came to be the clotheshorse of the Balkans. His closets bulged with uniforms of his own invention, in all colors and for all occasions. On his finger sparkled a solitaire diamond of astronomical dimension. As he mellowed, the medals increased on his chest and the comfortable

flesh increased on his middle, until he was the spittin' image of another famous Marshal, named Goering.

Back in the hills, the Partisans had said that the palaces would be transformed into playschools for children of peasants and workers.

Accordingly, Tito established himself in the *Bijeli Dvor* (White Palace) of Regent Paul at Belgrade. For their summer residence, the Marshal's wife selected King Peter's Palace at Bled. That other Spartan Communist, Vice-Premier Kardelj, found pro-fascist ex-Premier Milan Stoyadinovitch's mansion too cramped, so he took over a second Stoyadinovitch house and used both of them, with a staff of twenty domestics. Smaller fry among the Partisan great, who had spent half their adult lives in jails or hiding from the police, swarmed over the fancy villas of the dispossessed upper bourgeoisie.

Good Partisans took the best jobs in Government and Army, along with which went extra rations, shiny automobiles, and other emoluments. Surplus supplies brought an agreeable profit on the black market. Half-lovingly, half with contempt, officials privately took to referring to the people at large as the *Siva Massa*, the "Gray Masses," numberless and undistinguished.

CREDIT SIDE OF THE LEDGER

Mussolini made the trains run on time—and Tito accomplished equivalent miracles.

Miracles were required. The war had paralyzed three-fourths of the railway system. Only about 30 per cent of the prewar locomotives survived. One-third of the country's steel bridges, including practically all the important ones, were in shreds. The main tunnels lay choked by explosion. Yugoslavia lost 50 per cent of her draft animals, which had supplied half of the prewar road transport. The only vehicles available were those captured from the enemy, and most were falling apart for lack of spare parts.

Moreover, 1945—first year of victory—saw the worst drought in two decades. Harvests were 40 per cent below normal. A half-million peasant homes had been destroyed. Every village on my provincial tour had its story of devastation to tell. Korenica sustained 44 attacks, changing hands each time. Bihac underwent 57 air raids. Udbina, where 280 houses once stood, no longer had a single roof.

*Comrade Tito
Was a clever fellow
And he built a glorious Army.*

*Now Tito
Has ordered us
To rebuild our country also.
Comrade Tito,
Our dear flower,
If you weren't here
We wouldn't be either.*

This is the song some Bosnian villagers sang for us once as they danced the *kolo* in a meadow, their burned-out farmhouses serving as backdrop. It reflects the Partisan genius for channeling the limitless native energy into the patriotic task of national reconstruction. Within scarcely a year after the Germans, Italians, Hungarians, Bulgarians, Chetniks and Partisans finished wrecking them, most of the country's key highways, bridges and railways were restored. This would have been a spectacular feat in any case, but when contrasted with the lethargy of reconstruction under the bumbling rightist governments of neighboring Greece, it stood out as sheer brilliance on the record of the Yugoslav people and the Partisan regime.

A parallel drive to put men back on the land, in the fight against starvation, inspired mammoth communal energy. Simultaneously the regime moved livestock from less devastated areas to the deficiency districts. By the end of 1946 it seemed as though Yugoslavia would soon be facing the amazing prospect of self-sufficiency in food, thanks to restored communications, tractors, trucks and seed imported by UNRRA, and plain hard work. The Government counted up the nation's grain and decided there actually was a surplus for shipment to Albania and Rumania, Yugoslavia's ideological cousins. The cessation of UNRRA food supplies in 1947 no longer threatened to be the blow it might have been one short year before. While replanting their ravaged lands the Yugoslavs worked out a nationwide distribution network—operated mainly with UNRRA-donated vehicles—which set up a rationing system for equal geographic feeding of the country. An agrarian reform also helped by setting into motion a plan to move 200,000 mouths from unprofitable lands to the rich soil of the Voivodina, where the German minority had been swept away to make room for the colonists.

When the Partisans came to power, they found seven different currencies, all bad, circulating in different fragments of Yugoslav territory. Tito's finance experts scrapped them all, reinstating the dinar as the single money for all Yugoslavia and pegging it boldly at the rate of 50 to the dollar. This was grotesquely above the dinar's real value. How-

ever, the simple device of executing the first speculators snuffed out the expected inflation. Alone of all the southeast European countries, Yugoslavia was tolerably free of manipulation in foreign exchange, when natural economic law, dearth of public funds and absence of adequate cover should have booted the dinar down. The black market, too—except for certain highly-placed personages—was choked by the rope, literally.

The Partisans made progress in hygiene and education for the masses. There also came a measure of peasant self-rule: village committees burgeoned up everywhere and were actually consulted, for the first time in the memory of living man, on matters of local interest.

The greatest achievement of all was the abolition of racial and sectional discrimination, bane of the royal period. Laws against spreading of national hatreds were armed with the death penalty. Following Soviet precept, the regime gave cultural autonomy to the various peoples of the new Yugoslav federation. Whether this meant genuine self-government is a question which calls for closer inspection, but at least the system did make a commendable break away from the tradition of Serb master and provincial underdog.

Having said all this, it is time to put my remaining stock of superlatives back on the shelf. The rest of Partisan Yugoslavia, as I saw it—and have continued to see it through quaint and devious channels of communication down to the moment of writing—was on the edge of darkness. Even some of the achievements noted above had a murky side. One can pick one's way through the gloom by checking the pledges which the Partisans gave in the early days and ultimately wrote into their resonant Constitution.

RECIPE FOR AN ELECTION WITHOUT SURPRISES

"All authority in the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia," says the Constitution, "derives from the people and belongs to the people. . . . The people exercise their authority through freely elected representative organs. . . . Citizens are guaranteed freedom of the press, speech, association, assembly, public meetings and demonstrations."

This Constitution was promulgated in January, 1946, in a Constituent Assembly which had itself been created by judicious violation of all the freedoms just listed.

Though I did not quite grasp it at the time, those ten early weeks I spent in Belgrade were the crucial preparatory period for the final consolidation of Partisan power.

The signal came when Tito blandly informed the Congress of the United People's Front that he could no longer refrain from mentioning the problem of Monarchy vs. Republic, even though such mention was an open violation of the pact he had made with Subasitch—and even though all the charges which Tito proceeded to level at the monarchists dated back to *before* that pact. The Marshal flatly declared that the King could not return and that the People's Front would "fight for a Republic."

No fight was necessary. The Partisans got away with the first play, and after that there was no stopping them.

Tito said on the radio that Opposition parties outside the People's Front would be permitted to campaign freely. None of these parties had been allowed to do any organizing before passage of the law guaranteeing freedom of association. The elections were three short months away. To obtain an effective position on the ballot, a party needed signed petitions from a substantial fraction of the entire country. This called for a network of party branches, a vigorous opposition press, freedom of movement and, above all, freedom from fear.

The anti-Government newspapers which began publishing were soon stifled. Oppositional activities were possible in Serbia, but few organizers could be found hardy enough to challenge the uncontrolled Partisans on the territory of backward Macedonia and Montenegro. Bosnia was reported in a state of half-war because of alleged depredations by Chetnik bands still in the hills. The only hope of the opposition led by old Milan Grol was an alliance with the Peasant Party in Croatia.

The leader of this party was Ivan Subasitch, Foreign Minister, the man who had made Tito respectable by agreeing to fuse the London and the Partisan governments. But Subasitch's utility was now finished. He had complained about the way the voting lists were being drawn up. At the San Francisco Conference he had privately expressed some concern for the future of democracy in Croatia. Recalled, he became ill. A Russian physician, summoned by the Government, prescribed complete rest. With the prescription came a strong military guard. Members of his party—and the British Ambassador—who tried to see him were turned back at the door. Yugoslavia's Foreign Minister was a prisoner of his own government.

On October 7th, last day for filing of party lists in the forthcoming elections, the Croat Peasant chief still lay incommunicado. The following day he resigned, together with a Croat colleague whom he had brought into the coalition cabinet. In his letter to Tito—the important unpublished passages I obtained from an exact long-hand copy

of the original—Subasitch said: "True observance of our Agreement, especially a guarantee of liberty... was the only way by which victory in the war could be crowned by the happiness of the people... After many months I must note that the people still do not enjoy personal security. (They) live in such a state of fear of arbitrary and uncontrolled State agents that it is clear the letter and spirit of our Agreement are dead..."

Two days later, Grol and other Serb opposition leaders, unable to confer with the head of the Croat party and blocked from preparing any worthwhile campaign, announced a total boycott of the elections. Characteristically, they wrote their momentous decision on a typewriter and distributed carbon copies to their followers, not having any daily paper in which to publish it.

The way was cleared for the Partisan steamroller. On the appointed day, November 11th, Belgrade was placarded with posters assailing monarchism, fascism and capitalism. According to official figures, 92.49 per cent of those registered voted. These included the entire Army, ordered by its political commissars to vote Communist. Campaign speakers from non-Communist parties in the Front had been barred from the barracks. Columns of soldiers marched to the polls chanting "*Armija glasa partiju*" (the Army votes for the Party). Some of the columns marched right on from one polling place to another, halting only long enough to vote at each.

Balloting was supposed to be secret, the elector publicly dropping a little ball from his clenched fist into one of several sound-proof urns. In Belgrade the secrecy technique worked fairly well; in many rural areas a mysterious shortage of sound-proofing materials prevailed, and the little pellet dropped with a painful thud. This induced many voters to demonstrate their fealty in front of the Communist urn, which was arbitrarily placed first in line, the favored position and the traditional spot for the Government party in previous Yugoslav elections. The Communist urn was also festooned with garlands and the portrait of Tito, who theoretically was leader of the whole Front and not merely one section of it. When a British Parliamentary group observing the elections set out to examine the polls, a flying phalanx of small boys went on ahead to spirit the pictures and wreaths out of sight before the inspectors' arrival.* A peculiar aspect of the count was that

* This British group, which included the *New Statesman's* eager Kingsley Martin, will be long and dourly remembered by Yugoslav democrats for the fulsome praise it gave the regime after a carefully "conducted" tour. The visiting dignitaries, in one instance, professed themselves delighted with an OZNA jail where, in the manner of Potemkin, the real inmates were hidden in cellars

it took four days to add up the ballots in Belgrade and more than ten days in the provinces—although before the war it had taken only until midnight of Election Day in Belgrade and the next day in the provinces. This slowness could not be entirely explained away by the breakdown of communications or the increased size of the electorate.

The Croat statistics especially cast light on Partisan higher mathematics, such as the laws of probability. In the last royal Yugoslav election, the population of Croatia, despite the hazards of nonsecret balloting, had dared to vote 95 per cent for the opposition Croat Peasant Party of Dr. Vlatko Matchek. Matchek was now still in opposition—and in exile. Yet the Partisan vote-counters announced that Croatia had completely reversed her earlier landslide support for Matchek, whom she revered as a kind of Mahatma. The world was invited to believe that the Croats had flocked 91.77 per cent strong to the polls, and given Tito, Matchek's enemy, a 91.52 per cent majority!

For the entire country, the Government count produced a modest over-all majority of 90.57 per cent. On the strength of this, the newly-elected Constituent Assembly eighteen days later abolished the Monarchy and proclaimed the Republic. These momentous decisions received a total of 510 votes from the bicameral Constituent Assembly—the Federal House and the House of Nationalities. This was also the total of all the deputies present.

WANTED: AN OPPOSITION

Hindsight showed that boycott of the elections had been a fatal mistake. With one notable and solitary exception, which we shall come to later, there was not a single deputy in the Assembly who was willing to allow his thoughts to wander a hairsbreadth from the official line.

The first time I saw Opposition leader Grol after his resignation as Vice-Premier he was sick but defiant. The second time I saw him, toward the close of my last visit to Yugoslavia, he was well again but defeated. As for Ivan Subasitch, that other moderate leader who had trusted in Partisan democracy, he was both sick and defeated. I called on him in Zagreb. I stole in after midnight, when the city lay asleep and the OZNA patrol which watched Subasitch's residence

while Partisans posing as prisoners reclined in large upstairs rooms. Professional propagandists for the Partisans later boasted that the favorable report published by the group contributed greatly to Britain's hasty recognition of the new Yugoslav Republic.

during the day lay asleep also. The ex-Premier was too terrified by my visit to upbraid me for its rudeness. Out of respect for my uniform, he let me in, but he was so frightened and uncommunicative that I left quickly. I took with me the impression of a man completely broken, at the age of fifty-four. This was the same Subasitch who, fifteen months earlier, had defied the Pan-Serbists and King Peter, throwing in the lot of Yugoslav liberalism with the Partisans because of his conviction that Tito "wants what the people want—freedom and democracy."

During the year following the phony 1945 Federal plebiscite, surviving Opposition leaders again boycotted "elections" held in the various republics. A letter smuggled to me from Belgrade explained ruefully: "The Opposition parties put out feelers to learn what their followers thought about the advisability of trying to take part in the elections. They were deluged with entreaties not to try, because anybody who dared to become a candidate would risk jail, confiscation of his property, and even loss of his life. . . ."

Since an Opposition is necessary in a democratic political system, perhaps it could be found *inside* the People's Front. After all, the Front was a free coalition of seven political parties, according to the official description. "The Front," Communist Vice-Premier Kardelj assured me, "does not interfere with the organizational activities of its member parties."

Not quite.

In 1941, when the "National Liberation Front" was born, it contained no *parties*. Even in 1943 Tito himself stated that the Front was merely a union of *individuals* who once belonged to parties. The Front was for the nation, not for any political sect.

After entering Belgrade, Tito cast around for a formula which would give him status as leader of a united nation. His solution was to transform the National Liberation Front into a People's Front composed of parties ostensibly representing all classes and sections of Yugoslavia. But except for the Communists, the seven parties in the resulting coalition either had been insignificant before the war or were renegade splinter groups which, sooner or later, "expelled" the anti-Communist leadership and a good portion of the rank and file.

The pay-off came with the 1945 elections. The Constituent Assembly (which later became the People's Assembly, or Parliament) contained two Radicals, three Democrats, five Republicans, a half-dozen "individuals," twenty Serb Peasants and Agrarians, and forty Croat Peasants. Many of them were disguised Communists who had infiltrated into the other groups. Even with them, the total came to less than 80. The

rest of the Parliament—some 475 seats—belonged outright to the Communist Party.

BLUEPRINT OF POWER

It was therefore a Rabelaisian oddity that, according to law, the Yugoslav Communist Party did not officially exist.

This bizarre condition was due to a Partisan statute compelling all parties to file their by-laws and names of their officers with the Interior Ministry. Every party filed, even Grol's vanishing Democratic Party; the Communists did not.

As everywhere else, the Party in Yugoslavia was a compact system of small cells instead of a mass organization; secrecy served both to hide this fact and give insurance against a stormy future. One could never be too sure: some day the Party might be overthrown, and there was no point in leaving clues to the identities of its members.

Notwithstanding the mummery of legal nonexistence, the Communist Party dominated the Front and the country. The other parties in the coalition were ciphers. The constitutional structure was really a fabulous mirage. It pretended that the People's Assembly was the sovereign body in the State, and that the Cabinet was responsible to the Praesidium, a group of Assembly deputies whose Executive held the rank of Chief of State. In actual practise, sovereignty resided in a six-floor apartment house on Belgrade's Red Army Boulevard—headquarters of the Communist Party.

Every Communist Party has its *Politburo*—and Yugoslavia's was a hardboiled little club known in whispers as the Big Seven. In late 1947 these were Tito, Kardelj, OZNA chief Rankovitch, Central Committee Secretary-General Djilas, Parliamentary Boss Pijade, Finance Expert Sretan Zujevitch and Economic Czar Andrija Hebrang. All were longtime inhabitants of cells—jail and underground. All were confirmed practitioners of Party discipline, to which even Tito bowed when the inner majority overruled him. All unswervingly devoted to a total reconstruction of Yugoslavia after the Kremlin blueprint.

This blueprint made hash out of the Constitution's elaborate props for bogus parliamentary sovereignty and regional self-government.

The Premiers, Interior Ministers and Finance Ministers of all the six Republics and of the Federal Government were Communists. In the Federal Government, Communists held the key portfolios of national defense, labor, industry, transportation and foreign trade. A Communist Vice-Premier headed the all-powerful Control Commission which supervised every Government ministry, agency, and enterprise.

A Communist Minister Without Portfolio directed Education and Culture. Every non-Communist Minister invariably enjoyed the company of a Communist assistant who held the real power.

Russia was a land of commissars and soviets; Yugoslavia was a land of secretaries and committees (*odbor*). There was a governing *odbor* for every community, from the hamlet upward. Except in a handful of isolated localities where the Party had not yet penetrated, the secretary of every *odbor* was also the secretary of the local People's Front branch and at the same time the secretary of the local Communist cell. Along with this trinity of secretaries went an interlocking of the legislative Praesidium, ostensibly the chief *odbor* of the land, with the administrative agencies. The Praesidium contained nearly all the ministers of the central government, plus the premiers of all the Republics, plus some ministers of the Republics. The Praesidium thus was composed of ministers responsible for themselves as executives—to themselves as legislators.

The entire system was what the Partisans called *Jedinstvo Vlasti* (Unity of Power). Its declared purpose was to abolish the checks and balances between executive and legislature, as practised by the effete Western democracies. Its secret purpose was to concentrate all power in Communist hands. Against this dominion no appeal availed.

SHORT STORY OF AN OPTIMIST

Take the illuminating case of Dragoljub Jovanovitch.

Dragoljub Jovanovitch, a scrappy little man with a lopsided black mustache and laughing eyes, was the democratic leader of the Serb Peasant Party. Before the war the dictatorship had pushed him around and occasionally jailed him for his critical comments on the regime. It dubbed him a Red, a "slave of Moscow."

Jovanovitch became one of Tito's earliest non-Communist political allies, as Tito himself admitted. When I first reached Belgrade, the rambunctious agrarian leader was a Vice-President of the Front, a member of the Federal Praesidium and a deputy in the Serb Parliament. It was he who was chosen to defend Tito's anti-monarchist policy at the Congress of the Front, and he took two hours of earnest oratory in praise of the future Partisan republic.

Soon after Milan Grol quit the Government because it was writing too many undemocratic laws, I went to get Dragoljub Jovanovitch's opinion. He admitted at once that the Communists were misbehaving. "But," said he, "the important thing right now is reconstruction, not political theory. The Communists are overheated. When they feel more secure, they will calm down. When that time comes, moderates who

enjoy their confidence will be able to correct the excesses. I have faith in the future of the Front. Grol was wrong to quit."

That December (1945), Jovanovitch decided it was time to speak up. He addressed the Parliamentary committee which was drawing up the Constitution. Among other things, he said:

"I want to talk about the Communist Party. I do not apologize for talking about it—even though the Constitution does not mention it. . . . I am afraid that this unifying element [the Communist Party] may become as much of a barrier to our existence as was that other unifying element in old Yugoslavia: the Monarchy. . . . If we strangle other social and political forces, if we beat down their leaders and make their activity impossible, [we] may bring disaster to new Yugoslavia. . . . We have separated Church and State. It would be desirable to separate Party and State also, and thereby liquidate all resemblance between our New Order and fascism. . . ."

Needless to say, this speech—the text of which I secured from one of Jovanovitch's colleagues—was not reported to the press. What did happen was that the press promptly began labeling Jovanovitch an international reactionary. Only his prestige saved him then from OZNA's delicate attentions. But, as I wrote shortly thereafter in *The Nation*, Jovanovitch "might as well be jailed or dead so far as his present influence on the regime goes."

Jovanovitch held his peace for a space and then, the following July, returned to the attack. Rising in Parliament, he complained against the one-sided nature of several bills which were then on the docket. In particular, he assailed a foreign policy which consisted exclusively of consultations between the Communist Party and the Soviet Union.

In the bedlam which ensued, Jovanovitch was accused of insulting "our sacred ally," denying the people's sovereignty and libeling Parliament. In very short order he was voted out of the Serb Parliament, dropped from the Federal Praesidium, expelled from his professorial seat at Belgrade University for "undemocratic lectures," and even read out of his own party at a caucus called without his knowledge by a pro-Government clique. Communist Youth groups threw vegetables at him in the street. In February, 1947, he was manhandled by a gang of Communist braves. In March he was shouted down in Parliament when he criticized the budget for its heavy military appropriations. In April, Tito and the whole National Assembly walked out of the Chamber when Jovanovitch criticized the Five-Year-Plan for neglecting agriculture. In May he was arrested on charges of working for "foreign spy services." . . .

Apologists for the Partisans point out that the Communists were the only party which had branches in all parts of the country after Liberation: if they had not taken hold, Yugoslavia might have been torn by factional and regional conflicts, and become another Greece. This could be true. The Communists were not to be condemned for being in power but for what they were doing with that power. Through federation, the regime eliminated the sectional injustices which had wracked the old kingdom. But the new hatreds, bred by the tyranny of a single party, split each section *inside* itself more deeply than even the dictatorial King Alexander could have managed.

Of all the federated Yugoslav republics, I found Macedonia most contented with its new deal. An educated bourgeoisie might have been disgruntled, but Macedonia never had a bourgeoisie. It was a peasant community, and nobody there was concerned about individual liberty, because nobody knew what it meant. What they understood and had now obtained was national liberty, at least the trappings of it, which was what they had been demanding for half a century. They had their own flag, and an "autonomous" Parliament, and were happy (except that they would have liked to bring Greek Macedonia in and maybe a piece of Bulgaria).

But as usual, key positions in government went to staunch Communists—which meant, of course, that Belgrade had final say on everything: the Communist Party is the most centralized "State" in world history. The local rulers were Macedonians, it is true, and not Serbs, but they still took their orders from the old Serb capital. For this system the Communists coined the fancy phrase "democratic centralism" which, in the perspective of Yugoslav history under the Serbs, is a self-contained contradiction. When objections were raised by a non-Communist like Metodi Andonov, who had been made a Vice-President of the Republic for his heroism as Partisan commander during the war, he lost his honors in exchange for a term in prison. His offense was wanting Macedonia to secede from federal Yugoslavia and become totally independent, a free choice "guaranteed" by the Constitution. In March, 1947, the regime went so far as to condemn seven Macedonians to death for the "treason" of separatism.

The rugged inhabitants of Montenegro, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the mountainous parts of Dalmatia were tolerably satisfied with their lot, too. These were the areas which had been most neglected under the

Serb dictatorship. Their men were the first to join the Partisans, and the movement remained strong there after Liberation.

But in Croatia, Slovenia and Serbia—the heart, brain and backbone of Yugoslavia—a foreign traveler needed to be deaf and unseeing not to sense the deep and abiding hatred for the Partisans and their works. The peasantry was the most progressive in the land, and the middle class—what remained of it—nursed a long memory for wartime Partisan promises.

Bad as things had been under the royal dictatorship, Croatian taxes had gone only to Serbia, not the wild remote provinces; the Slovenes, heirs of Habsburg civilization, had been gently handled by Belgrade, and the Serbs, though held down by their own ruling class, had known a vigorous political life, with proud ideologies of democracy and a tradition of multi-party activity. Now they were all in the same groaning boat, with ex-fascists and anti-fascists indiscriminately packed into the brig and nobody and nothing to lead the simmering mutiny against a master who was not the proletariat—because a politically conscious proletariat hardly existed and had not been consulted—but the self-appointed messiah of the proletariat.

WIZARDS OF OZNA

In its zeal to guard the Revolution, the regime followed the rule of thumb that anybody who had not been an active Partisan or did not bow three times daily in the direction of Tito was *ipso facto* a fascist reactionary.

A basic tactic of wartime Partisan propaganda had been to insist on all occasions that the homes and private persons of Yugoslavs would be inviolable and that no punitive action would be taken against citizens without due process of law. This was ultimately sanctified as Article 28 of the Constitution.

But the lean and wild-eyed men who burst into the cities after three years of killing and indoctrination in the hills burned with a physical fever and spiritual fervor which had little room for abstract justice. To them the city dwellers were the vile bourgeoisie, fat lambs to be shorn for their sins of war-profiteering and collaboration. There followed a long period of pillage, officially condoned, and of excessive requisition, officially organized.

Simultaneously, with the guidance of the Russian NKVD, the Partisans organized OZNA, a secret police which put the old monarchy's bungling notions of repression into the shade. The first "wizard of OZNA" was a Serbian priest-soldier of dubious piety, Lieutenant Colonel Vlada Zechevitch. He was succeeded by General Rankovitch,

onetime tailor's apprentice whose five years in jail as a Communist had infused him with the will and the taste for unlimited correction of political infidels.

Belgrade had received colorful advance reports concerning the habits of its Russian and Partisan "liberators." Consequently, despite their heroic tradition which seemed to prescribe a universal uprising to aid the anti-German army at their gates, the inhabitants and underground fighters of the Serb capital sat on their hands throughout the fighting. Almost immediately after the German expulsion, OZNA's purges commenced. The Partisans found it necessary, for this labor of purification, to set a curfew at 8 P.M., two hours earlier than the Nazi curfew. Belgrade was treated as if she had been the jewel in Hitler's crown instead of an occupied city where the lampposts had served the German executioners as gallows for Serb patriots.

It is impossible to say how many "collaborationists" were rounded up after 8 P.M. in those early months and sent without trial to the firing squad, to the former concentration camps of the Gestapo, or to Siberia. My only index is the large number of families I found a year later from which fathers, husbands or sons had been snatched without recall. As often as not, those who disappeared had been as anti-fascist as they were anti-Communist.

Belgrade received special attention from OZNA because the capital had the densest concentration of the middle class. But no city, town or village escaped the attention of the secret police. My friend Bogdan Raditsa, who rushed home to Yugoslavia as a pro-Partisan liberal but has since recanted, visited Zagreb and estimated that the Croat capital, which had been rated strong for Tiťo, contained no less than 70,000 fresh prisoners within a month after Liberation. "I know from personal observation," Raditsa wrote much later, "that many of those arrested were democrats, while fascists were going free." *

The Partisan regime eventually consolidated its power, but OZNA consolidated along with it. Instead of being dissolved after the emergency (as had been promised at the beginning by Partisan apologists), the secret police became a permanent department of government. Terror is a prime weapon in the good Bolshevik's arsenal. Old Moshe Pijade once said: "The altar lamp of the Terror must never be extinguished. The people must have fear."

In the end, OZNA became a state within the State, its roots in Belgrade, its branches entwining every Republic and probing down

* *The New Republic*, September 9, 1946. Used by permission.

to the remotest commune. It had its own best-fed, best-clothed SS-style militia and a network of special prisons.

In addition, OZNA had an army of spies, including house-wardens and street-wardens to watch the comings and goings of the tenants of every building and alley in Yugoslavia. For efficiency, OZNA was compartmentalized into various control sections: for foreigners, for the military, for the general public—and for the Government. Since the Government and its bureaucracy, as we have seen, were largely Communist anyway, this underlined the interesting fact that even the Communists in Tito's federation of free peoples spied one upon the other. It was not surprising therefore that even the schoolchildren—whose rewritten primers now were stuffed with edifying stories and pictures about the Partisan Red-Riding-Hood's death struggle against the fascist Wolf-of-the-West—were recruited to spy enthusiastically on their parents.

As a result of the regime's unflagging encouragement to professional and amateur espionage, the courts of Yugoslavia enjoyed crowded calendars.

The decisions and behavior of the judges, moreover, were subject to review by the Public Prosecutors—which is equivalent in Western analogy to making the state attorney superior to the judge before whom the state attorney is pleading! Partisan magistrates were frequently dismissed, dishonored and even jailed if their verdicts were considered too "mild."

The Federal Public Prosecutor was elected by the Federal Parliament. He named the prosecutors for the Federal Republics, who in turn named the prosecutors for the smaller divisions. All these prosecutors, from first to last, were Communists.

Powers of the prosecutor were virtually unlimited. He had the widest of missions: to supervise execution of all laws. He owed responsibility only to the Federal Public Prosecutor. He could act on the smallest report by an informer. Defendants could not appeal a verdict, but the prosecutor could demand its annulment and even intervene during court proceedings.

Such an office seemed to call for considerable gravity and preparation of its awesome incumbent. "Where did you study law?" I asked the Public Prosecutor at Bihach. "I didn't," said he. "I'm a surveyor by trade. Being a lawyer wouldn't matter, because we have different laws now." This man, who spent four of his twenty-seven years as a guerrilla in the mountains, held the power to throw out all court decisions affecting the 200,000 persons in his jurisdiction.

FARMERS, MERCHANTS, AND THE PERILS OF PRIVATE ENTERPRISE

Among the many incentives behind the Partisan program of agrarian reform, not the smallest was that it would be a stout blow against the churches. Organized religion, the Partisans knew despite their frequent pledges against persecution, was a main enemy because of its competition for the minds and souls of the young and its stubborn antagonism to Communist gospel. Confiscation of church lands and their redistribution to the people were therefore highly desirable operations on all Partisan counts.

Apart from the church estates, the only substantial properties the regime could lay hands on for redistribution were those of the banished German minority in the Voivodina. Otherwise the pickings were lean, because Yugoslavia already was a predominantly small-farm country. The reform, therefore, was not nearly as vast as Partisan boosters abroad advertised.

Government policy toward the peasantry seemed to have a contradictory tendency toward, and away from, State control. The producer had to surrender from 50 to 70 per cent of his crop at fixed prices to State-controlled co-operatives. He could sell the rest on the open market, but at prices only one-third above the fixed price—a scale much more severe than in Russia, where the market for nonrequisitioned crops was completely free. On the other hand, the land distribution ostensibly aimed to increase and multiply small farmers, a tendency which certainly did not jibe with Bolshevik principles.

The contradiction, however, was more apparent than real. The one big redistribution took place in the north, on the ecclesiastical and ex-German properties. These were mainly given, not to the small farmers in that locality, but to Partisan veterans and poor peasants from the starvation belt in submarginal Montenegro, Bosnia and Macedonia, even to Slav refugees from Greek Macedonia. The colonists—innocent and primitive in their farming techniques—were transplanted from their mountains to the rich Voivodina plain, where their general ignorance and lack of machinery left them helpless before the complicated problems of intensive agriculture.

So, having dumped the mountaineers into their predicament, the regime came nobly to the rescue—and established experimental collectives. This, in the opinion of the alert smallholders elsewhere in Yugoslavia, was an unpublicized, cautious but unmistakable opening of the back door to the *kolkhoz*, the Soviet-style State farm. [The impression was soon fortified by the concentration of State tractor sta-

tions in the Voivodina, and the incessant touring of all the provinces by "ambulatory cinemas" with Soviet films depicting the happy life of the Russian collectives.]

If the Partisans were moving toward communization of the land in seemingly reverse slow motion, it was because an independent peasantry which included three-fourths of the people was no small opponent. But the weak and scattered practitioners of trade and industry presented a much less formidable obstacle. In that economic domain, the Partisans bowled private entrepreneurs over like tenpins.

By this time it is superfluous to hark back to old Partisan promises, but I cannot resist the temptation to recall their solemn salutes to private property and private enterprise as sacred values which they were fighting to preserve.

Once in power the Partisan regime launched a program of wholesale confiscation of factories and stores on grounds of treason, absenteeism, war profits, excess profits, anti-labor policy, economic sabotage and so forth. This was a wonderful device for getting everything for nothing, since no indemnities needed to be paid to the culprit.

The sheep whose factories had been seized by the Occupants during the war or who had simply closed down were exterminated along with the goats who had made bagfuls of money by working with the enemy. Totally innocent men were frequently sent to forced labor camps alongside of complete quislings; in either case, they lost all their property. Jews who fled for their lives before the Germans, leaving property which Axis or quisling authorities turned to war purposes, were condemned as collaborators *in absentia*. A publisher who spent his American exile in a sanatorium returned home in time to be sentenced to eight years' imprisonment and loss of all his property for collaboration with "reactionary elements in the United States."

Through one dodge or another, the regime, by the end of 1946, had grabbed mostly everything above the level of artisan and hole-in-the-wall shop. Chambers of Commerce were on their last legs. Any desire to invest private skills or funds had long since expired, and no credit was being offered by the State. Individual enterprise was fast becoming as archaic as the Karageorgevitch crown.

At this juncture the Government sanctified the loot by "nationalizing" an economy at least four-fifths of which was already in the Partisans' pocket. The forty-two industries listed in the new nationalization law included metallurgy, lumber, coal, transport, electric power, printing, sugar, alcohol, food, banking, machine tools, textiles, drugs, leather—in short, just about everything. Within a few hours of the

bill's passage, police descended on various small establishments, such as electric repair shops whose capitalist owner employed maybe two workers. Great seals of the State were affixed to the doors and the owners were shooed away, but not before various items of interest had been removed for special impounding. These might include the money in the cashbox and sometimes even the money in the proprietor's wallet.

This speed in execution of the law was in tempo with the speed of its passage. Yugoslav democracy certainly knew how to work fast when it had a mind to. The bill, labeled "priority" by the Government, was presented on the morning of December 5th. Nobody except the top officials knew about its existence in advance, or its contents. The measure was revolutionary, theoretically a total transformation of the State's economic structure. For extra spice, it violated the Constitution. Nevertheless, on the afternoon of the very day it reached Parliament, the bill became law, by *unanimous* consent of both chambers.

ECONOMICS AND THE PARTY LINE

Among other things, the nationalization law formally liquidated remaining foreign investments in Yugoslavia.

Now, chortled Industry Ministry Boris Kidritch, "our working class will become the real masters of their fate. By this nationalization of enterprises belonging to foreign capitalists, we have confirmed our independence and our economic sovereignty."

Few liberals would bewail this setback to economic imperialism too bitterly, however much they might gag over the Partisans' short-changing methods of compensation. Many of the dispossessed foreign interests had already done very well with their Yugoslav holdings. But the assumption which any liberal not enmeshed in slogans must make is that the Partisan blow for "economic sovereignty" was a good thing provided the State's management of expropriated wealth, domestic and foreign, benefited the Yugoslav people, and provided the regime did not drive one set of hungry foreign interests out merely to invite another in.

Neither of these provisions was fulfilled.

The Partisans approached the problem of management as sectarian politicians, not as economists. The bureaucracy increased enormously, a necessary evil of any State economy. But, although the regime had no trained classes of new managers for the new properties, it insisted on firing most of the old managers. Dismissing the collaborationists would have been reasonable enough. But the Partisans were not satisfied that

a State company director should have an honest record and be a skilled technician. He needed a sound Party history, too. As most of the staunchest comrades were highland ex-guerrillas or doctrinaire intellectuals, the expanding State economy soon found itself hamstrung by a managerial "élite" whose brains were more nimble with tommyguns or page references from Marx than with blueprints.

A British Royal Air Force unit opened a course in Belgrade, while I was there, to teach Yugoslav ground crews how to operate radio equipment. The British sergeant-instructor began with a black board lecture, to give his students some notion of how the innards of the gadget worked and what would be needed to fix them. "Never mind the diagrams," a Partisan inspector interrupted, "just show them which knobs to turn."

I visited a truck repair depot near Split on the Adriatic. It was one vast automobile graveyard. Of 1,800 trucks donated by UNRRA, nearly half were ready for the junk heap within six months, because of lack of proper maintenance. Their drivers had been given a short course in chauffeur-ing, but not a word about mechanics or lubrication.

Trials for mismanagement—and occasionally for theft and embezzlement—became disconcertingly routine. Too many State enterprises began showing a chronic deficit. Dimly aware at last that political "reliability" was no substitute for familiarity with administration, machinery and production charts, the regime stepped up its training program for civil service and technical personnel.

The industrial doldrums, meanwhile, were paralleled by much vigorous planning for industrial expansion. The regime knew that Yugoslavia possessed enormous but undeveloped natural resources. These had lain fallow for lack of the capital and skills to exploit them. Only by putting them to work, through a large-scale development program, could the Partisans hope to give Yugoslavia something better than the old and primitively low standards of living.

For this, obviously, they needed help, and much of it, from abroad. But here again, doctrine laughed in the face of simple economics. The Partisans were doing their best to alienate the investors and the governments of the West, where the greatest potential aid resided. Conversely, despite the professed passion for "independence and economic sovereignty," Yugoslavia was snugly bundling with the Soviet Union. Whatever political strength Russia might be able to offer in this romance, she showed small inclination or ability to give economic comfort. In fact, if there was any comfort at all, it was Yugoslavia which was providing it.

The one-way economic road to Moscow opened for business as soon as the Russians arrived. The Germans had pulled out too fast to destroy some very large dumps of food, to which the Red Army helped itself *in toto*. The Danube flowing east, and the roads heading back to Bulgaria and Rumania, were alive with edible freight. Part of this was still on the hoof, because the casual Russians sometimes forgot that the Yugoslavs were allies, an oversight which turned booty into loot, and cost Yugoslavia a substantial amount of livestock.

Early in 1945 Tito and Commissar Molotov signed a twenty-year pact of military alliance and friendship. This agreement dedicated the two countries to the development and consolidation of economic and cultural ties, a most salutary and inoffensive pursuit. However, the series of secret trade pacts which followed were not quite so exalted.

A statute on the Partisan lawbooks stipulated death for all "acts injurious to the State's economic power or tending to incite a foreign state to interfere with internal Yugoslav affairs." This measure must have been intended exclusively for Western perusal; it certainly couldn't have had Russia in mind. Thanks to the trade pacts, Yugoslavia shipped the Soviet Union food and raw materials in heroic quantities at super-bargain prices. In exchange, the Partisans received some grain—maybe 15 per cent of what the Red Army had taken out, but it was ballyhooed in the Yugoslav press as a blinding vision of the magnanimous Russian heart—some chemical products, and a great deal of armaments. This was a new twist to the old formula of "guns for butter." An extra piquant ingredient was the American origin of some of the Soviet donations: Lend-Lease equipment shipped to Russia for use against the Germans.

What the Soviets would accomplish for the economy of their junior Partisan partners remained to be seen. The record showed, however, that Yugoslavia's now estranged Western allies had accomplished much. Without UNRRA, Yugoslavia could not have made her rapid recovery from the war, and might not have recovered at all. In which case the Partisan regime today—if it had survived—would undoubtedly be singing less martial tunes, for both the domestic and foreign audience. And without UNRRA, shattered Yugoslavia would hardly have grown up to be a useful adjunct of Soviet policy in Europe. It was therefore notable that UNRRA in Yugoslavia received nothing from Moscow except orders. UNRRA's supplies to Yugoslavia came from the democracies; but UNRRA's chief of mission *inside* Yugoslavia came from Russia.

Tito took a long time before agreeing to let UNRRA give Yugoslavia \$420,552,000 worth of free supplies.

While several hundred thousand Yugoslavs behind the Dalmatian mountain barrier lay near death from hunger and cold, seven thousand tons of food, clothing and drugs lay just across the Adriatic, tied up on American ships in Italian ports. The Marshal haggled into the winter of 1944-45 about jurisdiction over the supplies. It was not until January, three months after his arrival in Belgrade, that Tito finally consented to let one hundred Allied observers enter Yugoslavia. As in other countries where UNRRA operated, they were only to *watch* the distribution of supplies, not control or handle it. Distribution would be managed entirely by the Partisans. And the boss of the UNRRA mission was to be a Russian.

When UNRRA agreed to this, it may have overlooked the fact that a Russian chief would be in a strategic position to insulate UNRRA's central headquarters in Washington from possibly troublesome reports by overconscientious observers about Partisan misappropriation of supplies.

The Partisans worked out a highly efficient distribution system. It was so good it not only got the supplies out to every part of the country but gave the impression that all the people were receiving relief *according to need*. This was a basic point on which the UNRRA contract insisted.

The truth is that the Partisans effectively ignored this provision. Here is how they did it:

The rationing system stipulated that workers ought to eat more than nonworkers—an admirable theory, provided that work was equally available to all. But every Yugoslav had to present a *karakteristika* when applying for a job. This was a sealed record of his political reliability—with comments. Not knowing what it said, he could not appeal its verdict. If the verdict wasn't good, he wasn't hired.

Holders of workers' ration cards paid 10 dinars for a package of K-rations. If any surplus remained, holders of nonworkers' ration cards could then buy the same package—for 30 dinars.

To freeze out the stubborn fellows who insisted on being individuals instead of disappearing into the "workers' masses," the regime also devised a special "co-operative system" in bedevilment of the expiring middle class. I first came across this system when I slipped away from a leechlike official guide and went strolling through the streets of Sarajevo,

shrine of Yugoslav liberty. I found a "Consumer Co-operative" (*zadruga*), its shelves heaped to the ceiling with tins of UNRRA food and local wares, all marked at fairly moderate price. But no independent artisan, no self-employed worker or merchant, no professional man could trade at the *zadruga*. The best he could do was the "State Store" (*granap*), where surplus UNRRA and unrationed goods sold at higher prices.

As for fuel and clothing, you obtained them if you had special coupons. For these coupons you applied to your trade union. You had to be a worker to belong to a union.

By such deft artifice, the Partisans quietly saw to it that friends of the regime got more of the UNRRA supplies, and enemies less or none.

The UNRRA contract also stipulated that UNRRA donate the supplies free, the Government sell them to the people at low prices and apply the cash revenue to reconstruction. Even at low prices, this income would have given the Partisan treasury huge relief. But it was an open secret that Government-controlled prices of some commodities, for which the regime had paid nothing, were beyond the reach of the citizens who needed them most. A pair of South African shoes cost UNRRA about \$3. UNRRA gave the shoes free to the Government. The Government sold the shoes for about \$15.

UNRRA was never able to find out how much cash the regime took in, but total proceeds from UNRRA have been estimated as at least four times the prewar Yugoslav budget. Without UNRRA the Partisans would have certainly gone bankrupt. Their civil service payroll alone was three times prewar size. Their new army was also three times prewar size. "National defense" in 1946-47 cost the Yugoslav budget \$210,000,000—70 per cent of the income derived from UNRRA. Thus, the money which sale of free supplies was supposed to provide for "rehabilitation" of Yugoslav economy really paid for a war machine.

Now you could walk clean across Yugoslavia without seeing one solitary inscription to indicate that the United States had donated 72 per cent of UNRRA's vast contribution or Britain 17 per cent. Not that you particularly wanted to see one—except that all of Yugoslavia was blanketed with posters praising Tito and Stalin as the saviors of the nation. The inference was that Tito and Stalin were responsible for the UNRRA gifts too, making another good propaganda reason for Yugoslavs to be faithful Partisans and worship the Soviet Union.

Just before UNRRA's worldwide activities were halted, two special investigating committees finally went into Yugoslavia to check on the

reports sent by some of us and by the organizer of our tour, UNRRA Public Relations Chief Leo Hochstetter, who had gone home in the meantime and blown his top in the *Saturday Evening Post*.^{*} It is one of the neatest mysteries of postwar Europe that both investigations found the Partisan handling of UNRRA supplies to be a thing of beauty and circumspection. The inspectors emerged with a bucket fairly dripping whitewash. One can only assume they were impressed with the assurances of Marshal Tito, whose honest face had already beguiled more astute observers, Winston Churchill and Franklin D. Roosevelt among them.

REVOLT OF SANTA CLAUS

The simple truth that Partisans were using the democracies' relief supplies in order to install totalitarianism in power and heap abuse on their benefactors finally occurred to the State Department and the American Congress. Their withdrawal of the United States from membership in UNRRA terminated that agency in 1947. From then on the United States would direct American relief operations itself, to make sure everybody who needed help got it—and knew where it was coming from. The Partisans not being willing to accept such "interference," Yugoslavia was temporarily dropped from the receiving line.

Within three months, the new policy was put to the test in Washington, when Ambassador Kosanovitch, bewildered ex-liberal whom Tito had previously used as democratic window-dressing in his Information Ministry, asked the State Department how much of the \$350,000,000 relief bill then before Congress would be assigned to Yugoslavia. In Belgrade, simultaneously, the Partisans requested the U. S. Embassy for an immediate allocation of grain to meet a food crisis which seemed to have developed overnight.

The U. S. agreed to send Yugoslavia potatoes, but flatly rejected the request for grain. In a strong note, the State Department refrained from pointing out that the Partisans, despite their pleas of crisis, were increasing their already top-heavy *military* budget for 1947-48 by 29 per cent! With tongue in cheek, the Department merely expressed confidence that the purchase of needed supplies would not "be beyond the Yugoslav Government's ability to finance." The note concluded that any eventual grant of further U. S. supplies would have to be preceded

^{*} November 2, 1946. Hochstetter revealed, for instance, that our visit to a textile mill in Zagreb was the first time he or the other UNRRA officials with us had ever been allowed in to see what was being done with UNRRA cotton—which had a way of getting into Yugoslav Army uniforms instead of clothing for Yugoslav civilians.

by proof that they would be distributed "efficiently and *without discrimination.*"

A few days later, Marshal Tito thanked the U. S. for the potatoes by denouncing American attempts to "blackmail" Yugoslavia into becoming a Western-style democracy. And by June, all talk of a food crisis had been ended by a good grain crop, and Yugoslavia was actually negotiating to *send* surplus food to Britain in exchange for industrial goods.

American Communists (and liberals still shielded from life's hard facts) raised almost as much outcry over our new policy as the Yugoslav press. Washington was charged with wantonly starving the Yugoslav people, with pettishly insisting on abject thanks from a war-shattered ally, with using bread as ammunition, and with other debasements.

Our decision, however, was the first enlightened move in the whole dreary history of Western relations with Tito.

It was now already too late, probably, to pry open Tito's grip on the Yugoslav people. But at least we would no longer be helping to tighten that grip. The Partisan regime would no longer be able to claim credit for a food prosperity which, in reality, the reviled capitalist powers had created.

Some liberals contended that economic distress must inevitably push an angry people toward the extreme Left. This was a likely development in countries where moderates or conservatives in power could be blamed for the distress. But in Yugoslavia the extreme Left was not an untried alternative, something bright and promising to which an unhappy people could turn. *In Yugoslavia the extreme Left was already in power.* With power came responsibility—and with responsibility came exposure to blame for the predicament of the nation.

Abandonment of UNRRA anticipated by a few months the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine, which in effect pledged our aid to all countries holding out against Communist capture. This Doctrine had its weaknesses, but less than the previous policy of do-nothing. We were finally making up our minds that the democratic way of life, with all its imperfections, was worth defending—and that a first principle of that defense was to cease giving aid and comfort to the totalitarian Left.

In this defense, we had one doughty weapon: economic power. We had won the war with it, and we had helped Tito become master over a brave people with it. For their sake, and our own, it was time to turn the weapon to better use.

THE LITTLE YUGOSLAV EXAMINES HIS BLESSINGS

What did the average Yugoslav little man have to congratulate himself for when he gazed on the changes made in his universe by the Partisan Revolution? How much better was the New Order for him than the Old?

There was a new kind of patriotism in the Partisan air, stirred less by fatherland than by a curious mixture of Pan-Slavic racialism and an international cult whose high priest resided in Moscow and whose gospel preached that the world was divided into "democratic people's states" which were all pure white and fascist capitalist states which were all a deadly black.

Many of yesterday's foes had magically become today's friends because they now all drank the same mother's milk of dogma.

Hungary in the recent war had marched into 8,000 square miles of Yugoslav territory and ruled 1,500,000 Yugoslavs in the shadow of Magyar guns. But Hungary was now a sister Soviet-satellite republic.

Bulgaria had been an even bloodier antagonist. But the Bulgarians now had a People's Front republic of their own, hence richly deserving the friendship of their "South Slavic brothers."

"TITO-HOXHA-STALIN," I read in sprawling paint on the face of a Partisan police station near the Albanian frontire. Enver Hoxha—Albania's "Little Tito," commander of a Soviet-trained army of 80,000. A thirty-year economic pact broke down customs barriers between the two countries, unified the currencies, pledged Yugoslav credits and raw materials for Albania's reconstruction—even brought Albania's territory into the scope of the Partisan Five-Year Plan. Despite its cries of economic travail, the Partisan regime was able to scrape together \$40,000,000 from its 1947-48 budget for "integrating Albania's economy" into the Yugoslav.

Only one more step was needed, and Europe would wake up to find an old Balkan dream achieved: union of Albania, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia into one compact federation from the Black to the Adriatic Sea.

Southeastern Europe deserved a truce to fratricide. But the sad fact was that this sudden and mutual love sprang from the common interests of belligerent regimes allied by an alien dogma against all unbelievers.

Yugoslavia tried to shout the world down in the wrangle over infidel Italy's claim to Trieste, and even threatened not to sign the Italian peace treaty—until Russia gave her the nod. She picked a bone with infidel

Austria, too, demanding the border province of Carinthia but holding out against a plebiscite, until that territory had been turned into a battleground of nationalist hatreds.

The Austrians and the Italians were Yugoslavia's wartime enemies. But what about the Greeks? The Greeks should have been linked to the Yugoslavs by memories of an equal and heroic resistance against a common foe. But the Greeks were now outside the Soviet pale. Therefore, the irresistible logic ran, the Greeks were oppressors of "Aegean Macedonia," unlawful landlords of the highly desirable port of Salonika, and agents of capitalist fascism.

Since Greek nationalists returned all these compliments with interest, Partisan propagandists never lacked for lurid copy. But there was one significant difference. Nobody ever heard of anti-Partisan Greek guerrillas turning up deep in Yugoslavia to fight Tito's army. On the other hand, this is exactly what happened in Greece. As a United Nations commission discovered when it went to investigate, the rebels were an alliance between Greek Communists and the SNOF, the Slavic National Liberation Front, some of whose members I had interviewed a year before—in Bitolj, Yugoslavia. So far as I know, these "Free Macedonia" guerrillas were Greek subjects, therefore violating no international law by choosing to fight their oppressive government. But their headquarters were undeniably located in Yugoslavia, many of them were trained in Yugoslavia, and much of their equipment came from Yugoslavia. Tito's regime was thus guilty of clear aggression against a neighbor, violating its international pledges and threatening the peace of the world.

The Greeks were the little, immediate enemy. Britain, the United States, all the bogus democratic states, were the world enemy. This, at any rate, was what the Yugoslav little man heard on his radio and read in his angry press. It could hardly reassure him of a snug and tranquil old age. He might be pardoned sometimes, perhaps, for thinking back nostalgically to the days of the old kingdoms, when monarchs moved their peoples around like pawns but played on a limited board and gave only partial allegiance to foreign masters. Now he lived in a land which had become the westernmost spearhead of a nervous, sprawling empire—to which his new rulers gave an absolute loyalty.

Meanwhile his children were learning that Tito and The People, not the family, deserved their ultimate devotion. They didn't owe anything to their father, the old rascal, because all he had done was have fun

in begetting them. As for their mother, why, they just owed her a few liters of milk.

For the grownups, life was one round of parades, in which you carried a heavy placard and "spontaneously" howled against Chiang Kai-shek or John Foster Dulles. After work you attended a lecture at your trade union on the evils of American assembly-line sweatshops or capitalist oppression of the Koreans. If you went out in the evening and came home after 10 P.M., you had to ring for the porter to unlock the house door, and you told him where you'd been and why.

Maybe all this didn't matter. In the old days, there were less parades and secret police, but you couldn't call it democracy. What did it matter now, as long as you could eat well and have a little time to enjoy life?

But did you? You were always being asked to give part of your time off to "voluntary labor"—and you gave it, whether you felt like it or not, because if you didn't somebody would mark it down on your *karakteristika*. When they asked for "voluntary overtime," you gave that too. And you couldn't just do a day's work during your regular hours: you had to push and hustle to be an *udarnik*, a shock-worker, like the Russian Stakhanovites, and fill the quota set by the shop-committee. You belonged to a union, of course, but all the union did was yell at you to work harder. Strike? How could you strike against the State, a Worker's State? Why, it would be like striking against yourself!

Well, wages were higher, anyway. But every worker's scale was fixed by law, according to the type of job. He stayed a prescribed number of years in each rank, and then he moved up. He could work hard and well, and get a citation or a medal, but no raise until his time was up. And what then? Foremen in the biggest factories received a maximum of 19 dinars hourly (38 cents). Nonrationed food, and all the other things which made the difference between marginal existence and civilized living, were frequently beyond the average citizen's reach. Whatever was available the regime diverted mostly to the army; exhorting ordinary citizens to pull in their belts—and levying various special taxes and "contributions" to smoke out hidden purchasing power.

So there was little to buy, and less to buy it with, and prices kept rising and the currency kept on slumping, because there was no gold behind the strength of the dinar, just fear. Russia, said the regime, would come to the rescue with loans and supplies. But neither the other Balkan satellites of Russia nor Russia herself could absorb what agricultural Yugoslavia produced, or supply what Yugoslavia needed. Yugoslavia's only substantial hope for recovery lay in the industrial

West, and especially in the United States—but in a United States now disenchanted by phony “People’s Front” coalitions, a United States demanding hard evidence of a square deal for the Yugoslav people at home and of minimum decency toward the world abroad.

EXERCISE IN SECOND-GUESSING

Was the liquidation of old Yugoslavia worth the sufferings of the war, the ruthless centralization of power, the throttling intellectual and moral climate which the average Yugoslav now had to endure?

Certainly, neither we nor the British had shown much profundity at a time when a little wisdom might have gone a long way. How could anyone have known that King Peter and the Pan-Serbists around him, with all the unsavory connotations of the throne, were right about Tito—and that Winston Churchill was wrong? The main problem of the moment was to kill Nazis—and Tito seemed to be killing them. The King warned passionately that giving Tito’s Committee free rein would end “in the exercise of power by a single party.” But Churchill, who could surely be trusted to know a Communist when he saw one, said Tito was behaving like a democrat. As for the United States, we went on a long time pretending that there was no problem at all. We clung to the comfortable fiction that we had no interest in “the purely domestic affairs” of our Allies. As late as July, 1944, an analysis from the Bureau of Overseas Intelligence, handed to me for guidance in editing OWI broadcasts to Yugoslavia, talked on for nineteen single-spaced pages without a single reference either to Chetniks or Partisans.

Only long after it was all over did it become evident that the middle-of-the-road liberals had been the only slender chance for solution of the Yugoslav crisis. They had no guerrilla armies, no flags, and no slogans—but they had moderation, a talent lacking in the extremist Chetnik and Partisan camps.

Britain and the United States resolved the civil war by throwing all their weight to Tito. It is now easy to see that we should have demanded a truce. If we had notified Chetniks and Partisans that we would support each or both in exact ratio to their efforts against our common Axis enemies, it would have called a halt to their private war. Before we were through, we gave Yugoslavia \$32,000,000 worth of Lend-Lease materials, and the British gave her \$56,000,000. That was certainly a big enough club to have flattened any feud.

An Anglo-Russo-American occupation should have been set up to supervise elections. The presence on the spot of three co-operating Allied armies would have deterred Partisans and Chetniks alike from

grabbing the power and arbitrarily identifying themselves and their pet theories with the masses. The people, for once, might have been able to choose for themselves. And, if we had made it possible for the moderates to be heard, the people might conceivably have chosen them.

The trouble with such neat theories, of course, is that they presuppose Soviet co-operation—and Anglo-American steadfastness in demanding such co-operation. Neither of these prerequisites for Yugoslav peace existed. The simple fact is that Stalin insisted on Tito. Churchill and Roosevelt, worried by the bugaboo of a separate Russian peace, felt they had to give him Tito. Everything which followed stemmed from that first denial of our previous pledges to let the Yugoslavs decide the future for themselves.

At Yalta we tried to retrieve lost ground by obtaining agreement on Three-Power collaboration for solution of post-Liberation problems. But Yalta bogged down in a morass of conflicting definitions. Terms like "free and unfettered elections," which the Powers solemnly guaranteed, suddenly stopped being simple concepts and became as subjective and esoteric as the enigma "What is God?"—or so, at least, the interpretations offered by Moscow suggested. In consequence, Yalta was dead in much quicker time even than had been needed to inter the Atlantic Charter.

Would a joint occupation have averted the disasters of unrestricted Partisan rule in Yugoslavia? No one can say, because a joint occupation has never been tried anywhere. Germany and Austria were no test: those countries were cut up into competitive segments of occupation, not bound together in a unity of occupation. Nor was there any Allied co-operation in Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria: tripartite in name only, the occupations there were nakedly Russian. What this meant to the Four Freedoms, or to democracy by any definition, became speedily evident after my arrival in Red Army Europe.

When I left Yugoslavia for the first time, and crossed the border into Hungary, I entered the Red Army's half of Europe with my confidence shaken by the Yugoslav adventures—but with my pro-Soviet opinions still intact. After all, I reasoned, the Russians couldn't be blamed for the caricature of Soviet democracy which the Partisans were so feverishly drawing. Partisans were Yugoslavs and Russians were Russians, said I to myself, and my wisdom seemed infinite.

So I left the trembling old man who pushed me out of his house because he feared my uniform would send him back to a Partisan jail,

and I walked hopefully down the sunny streets of Subotica to the Russian Kommandatura (Chapter 4, page 113). A smiling Soviet captain justified my fondest anticipations. He gave me a breakfast of vodka and bacon, and then drove me in his own car across the Hungarian frontier....

**RED
ARMY
EUROPE**

7

Hungarian Rhapsody, Minor Key

At Szeged, first sizable Hungarian town across the Yugoslav border, the Captain delivered me over to the commander of the local Russian garrison, a colonel, who insisted on another breakfast of vodka and bacon. In retaliation, I gave him a peppermint lifesaver, which he didn't like either. Apologizing for the lack of transport, he sent me in a horsecart to the Soviet roadblock on the main highway out of town, and ordered the guard there to load me aboard the first vehicle headed for Budapest.

This was a Red Army truck crated with live chickens. I squeezed into the caboose between the driver, a husky corporal, and a little captain of engineers in charge of the expedition. The latter, in fair German, said it was only right that they should be giving an American a lift, "because this is your automobile." He waved at the dashboard, and I saw we were in a lend-lease Dodge. All the cars we met were also "*vashi mashini*," as the Corporal put it—Dodges and Studebakers, with Russian insignia. Not all of these were working. Every ten miles or so, a truck of American origin lay in the ditch or embracing a tree.

"Crazy drivers, these Russians," the Captain at length suggested.

"*These* Russians?" I repeated with some surprise. "Aren't *you* a Russian?"

"Certainly not, I'm a Russian Jew," he replied mildly.

"But I thought—"

"That it doesn't make a difference in Russia any more," he finished. "Ah well, things are maybe a little better. But, you know, if I weren't a Jew, instead of being a captain now I'd be a colonel." He gave an inimitable shrug.

I was ruminating over this revelation when the truck let me out before the *Kommandatura* at Kecskemet, end of the line for the chickens. My luck slumped a bit here. It was dark before I had convinced the major in charge that my documents were bona fide even though I lacked a pass personally signed by Marshal Klementy

Voroshilov, Soviet commander in chief in Hungary. At length the Major promised a car for the morning. Meanwhile he billeted me on a terrified Hungarian family who seemed much relieved when I turned out not to be a Russian.

In the morning, the Major produced another horsecart and another road block. This in turn brought forth another Red Army truck. The only change in routine was a cargo of live pigs instead of live chickens. As I piled in, the sergeant who had escorted me from the *Kommandatura* demanded and received from the truck driver a receipt for one correspondent, two suitcases, one camera, one typewriter and one wrist watch, all in good condition at the moment his responsibility for them ceased. A few hours later, when I was deposited in front of the U. S. Military Mission in Budapest, the driver persuaded me to sign a similar certificate testifying to my safe arrival.

MILLIONAIRES IN UNIFORM

I arrived in time for lunch at the Officers' Mess. After Belgrade and Athens, the repasts here were a dream. Five courses, fluffy white bread, mounds of butter, rich meat with every meal, fabulous cakes and pies, liqueurs and two kinds of wine. The Armistice required the Hungarian Government to provision the Allied missions. There was very little food in the country, but always more than enough for us conquerors.

I learned I was the first correspondent into Budapest with Soviet authorization. A few others had smuggled in, mainly from near-by Vienna, but they had left, or been tossed out by the Russians, after a quick look.

Hungarian money had already begun its wild inflationary climb to the moon. U. S. personnel being paid in gold-seal dollars, every American became a tycoon in the commodity and financial market. For 1,200 pengöes (75 cents at the time) I rented the best room at the bomb-gutted Hotel Bristol—where each week a few more chambers were scooped out of the debris and until the end of my stay I had to clamber over timber and debris to get through the corridor. Nearly every time I met the manager he announced with a smile that my rent in pengöes had just been doubled, and I smiled straight back at him. When I left after three months I was paying some 60,000 pengöes—which meant about 61 cents.

It was not true, as some of my brethren later reported, that certain G.I.'s had bought up blocks of Budapest real estate. But officers and men became connoisseurs in tapestries, furs, silver and rare Hungarian paintings, fine or concocted. One could pick up a Rolliflex for \$30, a Leica for \$60—which made cameras an excellent article in trade for

pilots, visiting Congressmen and other itinerants, who could load up with as much as they could carry and sell in camera-starved Vienna for five times the investment and in Rome for a neat 1,000-per cent profit.

Most of the fifty-odd American and British officers lived on or around spacious Stefania-ut, once the leafy promenade and carriage drive of the old aristocracy, in elegant villas whose rents and small armies of domestics came free by grace of the Armistice terms. The Armistice, it was true, had not stipulated such luxury, but the Hungarian officials who drew vast sums for Allied maintenance put on a lavish show in order to conceal the tidy surpluses which they pocketed.

American enlisted men occupied the swank Residence Pensio, across the square from Parliament off Kossuth Lajos-ter, or in the middle of town at the not-so-swank Hotel Astoria, which made up for it by the magnificence of its basement Pengö Club, exclusively G.I., where top-flight bands and entertainers knocked themselves out nightly for a couple of dollars.

But the Pengö Club was as nothing compared with the haven of rest and relaxation commandeered by the officers. The Park Club on Stefania Boulevard was like a backdrop for a Hollywood epic filmed in Ruritania. Once it had been the summer residence of the aristocracy's National Casino. Now British and American officers, the staffs of the two political missions, assorted diplomats of the minor Allied states and (by courtesy) high officials of the Hungarian Government, dined there in Nineteenth-Century opulence. A seven-piece Gypsy orchestra diligently scraped and blew heart-rending melodies. Twice a week one mounted a red-carpeted, regal stairway to watch the latest films from America and England blinking out of a 16-mm. projector. In the soft-lit, Cecil Beatonish bar, champagne gurgled at 40 cents the bottle, accompanied by drums and a chatty piano (played by George Fejer, the "Gershwin of Hungary," ex-professor at the Academy of Music but very grateful for his present job), and sultry Hungarian blues-singers who spoke no English but knew a half-dozen archaic American songs apiece, all in earnestly comical accent, like "Vood you laik to sveeng ahn ah stahr?" or "Meene frahm Treeneeded."

Russian officers hardly ever visited this brilliant playground. Somehow their requisitioning had overlooked the Park Club, plum of Budapest palaces. But what their grab lacked in quality it redeemed in quantity, by dint of their overwhelming numbers as the Army of Occupation. Soviet headquarters and the homes of senior officers concentrated in a wide and heavily-guarded area on both sides of Andrassy-ut, one of the city's main boulevards. Thousands of Russian

soldiers were scattered in billets around Budapest, and hundreds of thousands in the rest of the country. These men lacked dollars, but they nevertheless did pretty well because Red Army printing-presses gave out an avalanche of pengöes to meet the Occupation payroll at Hungarian expense. Weighed down with bundles of easy money, the Russian soldiery were on the biggest shopping spree of their lives.

DEATH OF A CITY

The Allied missions and the Russian Army never, as the saying goes, had it so good—and the Hungarians never had it so bad. The word for the latter was desolation.

Hungary had endured the direct shock of war for scarcely a year, but long enough to take a pounding in almost every acre of her soil. The Russians advanced fighting, the Germans withdrew fighting, and between the two parallel lines of fire the cities, towns and villages were leveled. On Christmas Eve, 1944, when the Red Army assaulted Budapest, that carnival capital became a community of cave dwellers. The Germans held the inner ring, a fortress of pillboxes and flesh. The Russians sat back around them, and pulled the lanyards on their heavy guns and sent the bombers over. For twenty-five days in Pest, and for fifty-one days in Buda, the Hungarians cowered in cellars. When they emerged they found their world literally in ruins.

The great dome of the Habsburg palace on the Var Hill was a burned-out skeleton; all seven bridges spanning the Danube sagged into the river; the Corso, where once the glamor of central Europe paraded, was choked with wreckage and ripped by tank treads; Margit Island, Budapest's Riviera, resembled one of the wilder scenes from *The Tempest*; Buda smoked liked a funeral pyre above the corpse-clogged streets of tangled Pest. Only one-fourth of all the buildings in the city stood intact.

There was also a Russian Army eager to collect the prizes of victory. Scarcely a house in the conquered capital escaped the looters.

By the time I arrived seven months later, every street had its neat mound of debris, the broken faces of some of the fine old buildings were being mended, and Budapest, that dream city of imperial stone, grandiose columns, monumental archways and noble avenues, was beginning to recapture a whisper of its ancient dignity. But life was not so easy to repair.

Hungary's economy lay paralyzed. Devastation of the farmlands, and the burden of supporting a big Occupation Army, had reduced the country to near starvation. Farmers refused to surrender their remaining produce, because the Government could offer nothing in

return. Vital materials were critically short: drugs, glass for an infinity of bomb-shattered windowpanes, clothing, fuel to fight back the approaching winter. Surgeons operated without anaesthetics. Infant mortality rose to 45 per cent. In November, the total registry of births was 822, as against 2,108 deaths.

The wife of the State Secretary of Finance collected twigs in a basket whenever she went into the suburbs to give music lessons. My most treasured possession as winter came on was one of those round electric heaters with protruding red-hot snout which reflects a cheerful cone of heat and can bake one's front while permitting slow frostbite in the rear sections. After a time, even this comfort was curtailed, as the coal crisis cut the city's electricity down. At 10 o'clock each morning, all power went off. Machines everywhere stopped in the middle of a turn; streetcars went dead, and if they were caught at an intersection they had to be pushed clear by the passengers. Everything existed in a drab, wintry grayness until the current came on again at 4 P.M.

Hungary at the same time was just beginning the most catastrophic inflation known to modern times. With goods impossibly scarce, prices spiraled. Short in tax collections because there was little industry and less income, the Government turned to the printing press for funds, which automatically kicked prices higher still. It was Greece all over again, but immeasurably worse, for Hungary was receiving practically no outside help and had an Occupation and a reparations bill to meet. The pengő had been worth five to the dollar before the war. On the last day of July, 1946, when the currency was completely scrapped and a new money introduced, one dollar brought the unreadable sum in pengőes of 18 followed by 17 zeroes.

In this nightmare of digits, all economic custom and procedure lost their meaning. Some employers even stopped paying their workers in money altogether, giving them the equivalent of "calory-pengőes" instead—so many eggs, onions or kilograms of flour. A so-called "tax pengő," invented by the Government to maintain the relative value of debts on the sliding inflationary scale, itself caught fever from the ordinary pengő and went zooming off into the speculative billions. One had a haircut at the barber's, for example—handed him several fistfuls of banknotes, and then gave him twice as much more as a tip, which came to something like \$40,000 according to the old pengő rate, and it still amounted to only six cents in real money.

Hardest hit were the white-collar and professional workers. The old aristocracy, deprived of its estates by a land-reform law, managed to ride along by selling jewels, gold and personal belongings piece by

piece. (A Count I knew took down his hunting rifle once a month and bagged enough game to keep him and his family alive another month.) Workers were given first preference by the Government on food supplies, to lessen the constant threat of riot and revolution. But the salaried classes had only their meaningless pay envelopes. If the Prime Minister received \$3 monthly, what could university professors and a mere bank president expect? The year 1945-46 saw the total ruin of the Hungarian bourgeoisie.

WITH HAMMER AND WITH SICKLE

As if this were not enough, all classes of Hungarian society lived for a year after "Liberation" in a kind of Russian-made Wild West, complete with nightly gun battles, robbery and murder. One could make allowances for the first fury of the Soviet troops when they broke into Budapest. After all, the Hungarians asked for it by invading Russia—and by behaving vilely on Russian territory. One could understand the black bitterness in the heart of a Russian whose family had been massacred by the enemy or whose comrade had fallen the previous day in the storming of Budapest. Without necessarily condoning the excesses, one could withhold condemnation from simple peasant soldiers, trained to kill and untrained to hold their liquor, let loose with their guns on a city filled with "fascists." Moreover, many of Marshal Tolbukhin's assault troops were wild Mongols and Kalmuks.

But that was January and February. I arrived in September, when the lusts of battle had presumably subsided, and the shock divisions had been replaced by soberer garrison troops. The first exuberant wave of raping, looting and killing was over. (The women, according to sober testimony too frequently confirmed to be explained away as fond and imaginative reminiscence, had been violated on a scale appropriate to total war; behind battered-down doors, trapped in cellars, pursued over rooftops, and assaulted on crowded streets in broad daylight). But in the single month of September, 1,998 murders were counted in Budapest.

The capital after dark was silent and lifeless, except for bursts of gunfire. No Hungarian walked abroad unless he absolutely had to, except those looking for drink or adventure. When people went visiting, they arrived before twilight and stayed until morning.

On my sixth night I encountered my first Budapest corpse. He was about thirty-five. He lay sprawled on the pavement, stripped down to his underpants and socks. Blood still trickled from a bullethole in his head. There was nobody in the streets except five Russian M.P.'s

around a lamppost about fifty feet away. They had their backs to the body and were singing something very cheerful in close harmony.

In a jeep and wearing Allied uniform, one was reasonably safe—but not too good an insurance risk. Jeeps were constantly being towed away even though we lashed the steering-wheels down with big locks and heavy chains. Both Allied missions imposed a midnight curfew on all their vehicles. This left plenty of time before midnight for disagreeable occurrences. Mine were minor, because I was fired at only three times, once by a slightly tight Russian sailor who apologized that he had mistaken me for a Hungarian on a rainy night, again by a Russian M.P. patrol which apologized that my headlights had blinded them to the knowledge that I was driving an American jeep, and finally by two Russians who knew it was an American jeep and weren't apologizing for wanting it, so I had to start up again from second gear and drive straight at them to escape.

"How long will this go on?" the newspaper *Vilag*, speaking out as much as it dared, inquired one day. "Things are happening which are so astounding as to be almost laughable. One citizen sets out to visit his parents' grave, and returns in his underwear. Another waits for a streetcar and has a revolver leveled at him. We are at peace. We have democracy in the making. But in fact we are under the rule of bandits. . . ."

A large part of the municipal police lacked uniforms, to say nothing of weapons. They wore impotent red-white-green armbands with the word "Police" in Hungarian and Russian. The few who did have arms were forbidden to use them against Russians. The uniform of the Red Army was sacrosanct. Even self-defense against it was a crime. Once, in broad daylight, I saw a Russian sergeant hold up a Hungarian major. The major handed over his wallet, but when the sergeant began drawing a bead on him anyway the Hungarian ducked, whipped out a revolver and shot the Russian dead. Hundreds of people witnessed all this. The major waited by the body for the police. A Soviet staff car drove up instead. Within the hour the Hungarian was court-martialed and shot.

To cautious complaints from Hungarian and Allied authorities, Marshal Voroshilov imperturbably replied that the nocturnal gangsters were criminals released from jail by the retreating Nazis, or Hungarians in stolen Soviet uniforms, or Russian deserters. Early in 1946, however, the real identity of the culprits became evident by simple deduction when a new Russian garrison commander of Budapest abruptly changed previous policy. With the Occupation forces dwindling through withdrawals to the USSR, he banned the remaining units from

execution or long imprisonment. Horthy correctly boasted that both Hitler and Mussolini had picked up an idea or two from him. Another innovation of the early Horthy regime was passage of the first anti-Semitic legislation in post-1918 Europe.

Small opposition parties in Parliament made sincere but feeble protest, and a few workers and intellectuals got their heads bashed in for daring to speak out. Otherwise the regime had no trouble. Horthy and Bethlen cemented their grasp by turning the civil service into a trough for loyal followers.

The one significant change in Hungary between the wars, was the rise of industrialist and financial elements—and especially of a military caste—to share the power with the old aristocracy. Bethlen vainly tried during his ten years' rule to keep up the aristocracy's appearances and preserve Hungary as a genteel kind of National Park for feudalism just as the U. S. National Parks preserve bison and other momentos of long ago.* After Bethlen's departure, succeeding governments became more openly dictatorial and militaristic. Nevertheless, the new leaders were content to ally themselves with the old ruling clique, imitate its high-toned manners, and divide the profits of government.

Hungary in the 20's and 30's was a paradise of private and official graft. Noblemen forced to sell their estates for ready cash and come to the capital in search of a livelihood received juicy honorific appointments to company directorates or became "fixers" who could reach the ear of any minister, frequently a relative, for the proper fee. A new landless aristocratic "middle class" arose whose main industry was bureaucracy and the buying and selling of official favors.

Occasionally a minister turned up who was sincerely interested in schools or social legislation, but he and his program would be quickly submerged by charges of extravagance and radicalism. It was easier for everybody to go along with the stream, treating government as a device for the maintenance of privilege and as an opportunity for personal enrichment.

HUNGARIAN WAGON AND NAZI STAR

To lull and divert mass resentment from this burlesque, the ruling class dished out the hollow bread and futile circuses of superpatriotism. By the 1920 Trianon Treaty, defeated Hungary had paid for her Habsburg alliance with the Kaiser's Germany by losing nearly three-fourths of her territory and two-thirds of her population. Only a third of these "Hungarians" were Magyars; the others, mostly Rumanians

* G. Palocz-Horvath, *In Darkest Hungary* (London, 1944), p. 121.

and Slavs, scarcely felt homesick for their departed Magyar overlords, who had exerted themselves to Hungarize the alien tribes by obliterating their national languages, cultures and leaders. Nevertheless, the magnates refused to write off the truncated territories as lost.

Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia held the territories which Hungary coveted. To regain them, the Magyar State could expect help only from other "have-not" States which, like itself, stood to profit from rearrangement of the map. Irresistibly, therefore, Hungarian foreign policy gravitated toward the land-hungry fascist dictatorships, and particularly toward Nazi Germany.

Friendship with Germany brought forth the anticipated dividends. After the Munich cleaver came down on the paralyzed Czechs in September, 1938, Horthy followed through by demanding and receiving a slice of southern Slovakia. The next March, when Hitler occupied Prague, Horthy and his perennial white charger pranced into Carpatho-Ruthenia. A year later the Axis "awarded" the better half of Transylvania to Hungary, along with a million Rumanians.

Repayment for these favors was less sensational, imperceptibly cumulative and ultimately fatal. Early in 1939 Hungary signed the Anti-Comintern Pact, late in 1940 the Axis Tripartite Pact. Discriminatory bill after bill was enacted against the Jews to steal the thunder from the increasingly powerful Hungarian Nazis—and reassure the Fuehrer of honest Magyar intentions. Fertile Hungary served as breadbasket for the Axis on a blockaded continent, also contributing oil, coal and bauxite to the Nazi war machine and facilitating the transport of Rumanian petroleum.

The last die was cast in April, 1941, when the *Wehrmacht* struck into the Balkans. Ravenous to "redeem" more territory, Hungary welcomed the transient German Army, invaded neighboring Yugoslavia—with whom she had just signed a friendship treaty—and found herself irrevocably engaged in a world conflict as satellite of Germany.

Thereafter the course set for Hungary by her muddle-headed rulers led the Magyar people inexorably to their doom. The war against Yugoslavia broadened into war against the Soviet Union, Britain and the United States. How distasteful the latter move must have been even to the Hungarian leaders was clear in the fact that Hungary paid an installment of her American war debt the day before she declared war on us. A book by a Hungarian, entitled *Germany's Military Prospects*, which proved that Germany could not win the war, sold 100,000 copies in Hungary before it was banned.

Initial successes in Russia were reversed by increasingly heavy Hungarian casualties on the River Don and other places somewhat distant

from the borders of St. Stephen's realm. As early as 1942, the Hungarian Government had begun flirting half-heartedly with the Anglo-Americans to bargain its way out of the war. By the Spring of 1944 Horthy was at last really convinced that the alliance with Hitler had been a deadly blunder despite its emoluments in chunks of territory torn from defenseless neighbors. Before he could make up his mind what to do about it, German parachutists on March 19th dropped on Hungarian airfields, Gestapo "tourists" emerged in full uniform on the streets of Budapest, and Panzer columns crossed the frontier at 4 A.M. Hungary was now "benevolently" occupied by her own ally.

Despite this, Horthy clung for another half year to his regency while in the East the *Wehrmacht* policy of sacrificing satellite troops to cover its own retreat sowed death, mutiny and desertion in the Hungarian Army. The Admiral was eager for the cake he had already eaten. He labored secretly for an armistice which would make peace with the Allies and yet retain the territories bestowed by Hitler. Finally Radio Budapest on October 15th broadcast a proclamation from the Regent that he was arranging an Armistice with the Allies.

Horthy's move had small effect. Fragments of some divisions at the front went over to the Russians, but the bulk of the Hungarian Army under German command continued fighting. The Regent's renunciation of the Germans was nullified within three hours through a *coup d'état* by the violently anti-Semitic Arrow Cross Party. A fanatic pro-Nazi regime was established to carry Hitler's war loyally on, massacring 30,000 Jews and turning another 100,000 over to the Germans for deportation to the gas chambers and crematories. (Before facing a Hungarian People's Court, which hanged him a little more than a year later, "Nation Leader" Ferenc Szalasi, the Arrow Cross chief, insisted to me that he had labored to rid Hungary of the Jews only to "help them organize a State of their own"!) As the Red Army pounded forward, the Arrow Cross Government withdrew to western Hungary for a last suicidal stand and then fled into Austria. Its final act of devotion was to assist the Germans in robbing its own country of all the food, machinery, transport and war-essential materials it could collect in its retreat.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

A housecleaning was undeniably in order. In preparing the house for the infant Hungarian democracy, however, the Russians swept out the baby along with the rubbish.

Throughout the Winter of 1944-45 the keynote of the Red Army and Communist Party was political freedom.

Hungarian Communist leader Matyas Rakosi toured the liberated areas assuring everybody that "we want a democracy, a coalition, not a dictatorship of the proletariat." The "coalition" was to be a national union between the Communists and three other democratic parties. The first of these were the Social-Democrats, who were strong in the trade unions and had vigorously, though not very effectually, fought for workers' rights in benighted prewar Hungary. Next came the National Peasants, an obscure agrarian movement. Last, but politically most important, was the Smallholders' Party.

This party was a mixed group representing the more progressive elements of the urban and agrarian lower middle class. Only fifteen years old, it had in its early days been under dubious influences but it had finally purged its reactionary leadership and vindicated itself by fighting openly and bravely against the pro-German clique, anti-Semitism and all the other vapors of expiring Hungarian feudalism. In the last prewar elections the Smallholders won 27 per cent of the popular vote despite Government terrorism. Now, the old conservative parties being discredited, the Smallholders stood forth as the potentially strongest single party with a democratic background in Hungary.

Under ostensibly benevolent Russian patronage, plans went forward to create a provisional National Assembly which would nominate a provisional Government. But simultaneously the Communists prepared to build up control of key branches of power, steadily liquidating the resistance, and all the time professing the highest democratic intentions. It turned out to be the same program as in Yugoslavia (as I was painfully forced to realize), but more difficult, because Tito already had a well-oiled organization and Allied recognition, whereas the Hungarian Communists, being unknown and few, had to start from scratch.

The leaders of the Social-Democrat and Smallholder parties were still in German concentration camps or cowering in Budapest cellars when the Communists began operations. The few non-Communist politicians who happened to be available on liberated soil were told by the Russians to conduct no organizational activities, because of the "military emergency."

This did not apply to the Communists, somehow. Their leaders were flown in during October from Moscow, where they had lived in safe exile during the war. Direct contact with local Party workers had already been established a month before by Soviet parachutists.

The Red Army fitted the Communists out with money, automobiles, radio sound-trucks, gasoline, newsprint and everything else needed for full-blast propaganda. Communist books and pamphlets printed in Moscow in the Hungarian language arrived by the trainloads. The

Army gave public showings of the latest Russian films. Wherever the Russians entered a town or village, a "national council" was set up to administer it—with the Communists in the chief posts. Theoretically, these councils were to be responsible to the Provisional Government. Practically, because of bad communications and Russian preference, they reported to the local Red Army commanders. The Army also took over every industrial plant in its line of march and supervised the "election" of a factory committee to co-manage the plant side by side with the owner: the workers were mostly Social-Democrat but, under the eyes of Soviet officers, the committee came out mostly Communist.

The Russians selected the city of Debrecen, 116 miles east of Budapest, as seat of the Provisional Parliament. They regretfully explained to an inter-party caucus, which was ordered to get together a Parliament, that time and the chaos of war made regular elections unfeasible. The Communists therefore suggested that a varying number of deputies be allotted to different cities in the liberated zone, at that time about a third of Hungary. A Communist suggestion in those days was obviously a Russian order. The suggestion was adopted.

The "national councils" were empowered to choose the deputies for each locality. Since these, as has been seen, were controlled by the Communists, their choices were somewhat one-sided. With a great show of liberalism, the Communists agreed to accept mere parity with the other parties. But the trade unions, the Hungarian troops under Soviet command, and even Partisan units which had mysteriously materialized after the Russian arrival, were given separate seats. The result was an overwhelming majority for the Left.

After deputies from liberated Budapest and western Hungary were added, the completed Provisional Parliament in mid-1945 contained 324 leftists and 174 moderates.

As it worked out, this did not matter very much, because Parliament had no legislative authority or any authority at all. It held only two sessions.

One of its first acts was to approve the new cabinet list prepared by Soviet Minister Pushkin. Thereafter the decisions continued to be made by the Russians through the Communists, who dominated the inter-party caucus, which in turn told the cabinet what decrees to proclaim and the Assembly to ratify.

This inter-party caucus quickly demonstrated itself to be a three-against-one affair.

The Social-Democrat spokesmen recognized by the Soviets were ex-

tremist members who had occupied second rank in the party leadership before the war and were hearty yes-men for the Communists. The National Peasants were a purely stooge group which the Communists had conjured up to seduce the rural proletariat.

The Smallholders were the only non-Marxist party. But even the Smallholder spokesmen who functioned in Debrecen had dubious credentials. One of them, Istvan Balogh, was a hitherto unknown Catholic priest whom the Russians dug out of a cellar in Szeged. As Secretary of State in the Prime Ministry, he later followed a consistently pro-Soviet line. Another, Janos Gyöngyösy, had been an obscure teacher of history and bookseller in Bekescsaba, one of the first towns the Russians took after crossing the Rumanian frontier. Casting about for someone who could speak foreign languages and therefore be eligible as a Foreign Minister, the Russians hit on Gyöngyösy, presumably because he had translated a book once from the French. He was plucked from his bed in the middle of the night and informed he was to be Foreign Minister.

The whole Government, in fact, was a hodge-podge conglomeration, due to the poverty of real talent in the liberated zone. Bela Zsedenyi, Speaker of the National Assembly and titular Chief of State, was an amiable professor from a provincial law school. The Premier, Bela Miklos, and the Defense Minister, Janos Vörös, were generals who had gone over to the Russians after Horthy's proclamation. Confronted by a choice between entering the cabinet or being denounced as war criminals, they were scarcely free agents. After some shuffling of portfolios, the composition of the Government shook down to two generals, three Communists, three Social-Democrats, three Smallholders, one Peasant and one Independent. Even when the generals and the Independent sided with the Smallholders, they were still outnumbered seven to six.

The temporary capital had been badly hit during the fighting. It lay isolated in the middle of the *puszta*. It labored without electricity, water, telephones or even desk space. All the government bureaus were crowded into a single Debrecen building, the county branch of the State Finance Office, one ministry to a room. A group of ministers who came down to Budapest in the spring to inspect the battered capital prior to moving the government there, journeyed in jeeps borrowed from the American Military Mission.

There was a weird shortage and overabundance of personnel. Some ministries consisted of the Minister and nobody else. Other Ministers had aides whose names they didn't know. People turned up from

nowhere and nominated themselves as Secretaries and Under-secretaries of State. After Budapest's liberation in February, a special bus trip was organized for a single Budapest-Debrecen run, and bloody fistfights raged to decide who was to go. Others bribed Russian lorry drivers with gold to drive them to Debrecen in order to obtain administrative appointments.

In such an atmosphere, it was just as well that the Provisional Government had little to do. The major achievements of the period—land reform, People's Courts and the final Armistice—were managed by the Russians in intimate consultation with a few key Hungarians. Some attention was paid to taxation, inflation and the organization of a Hungarian Army to help fight the Germans, without notable results. Otherwise, administrative accomplishments were virtually nil.

Politically, however, the period was one of intense activity—for the Communists. Thanks to Soviet assistance, they were able to race over all the steadily widening free territory, in a fever of organization. Their biggest prize, of course, was Budapest.

THE GREAT CONVERSION

The Communists swarmed into Budapest in February, 1945, as soon as the capital fell. Nobody else, and especially not the Debrecen Government, was permitted to enter the city. They arrived preaching the virtues of coalition government. But for several months, only Communist and Social-Democrat newspapers were printed. The Communists dotted the city with their party offices. For their main headquarters, they eventually took the sumptuous and undamaged building on Akademia-utca which had formerly housed the reactionary Government party. Communists blossomed out as directors of newly-created state-controlled companies. Zoltan Vas, Hungarian-born Soviet citizen, ousted the Smallholder incumbent and became Lord Mayor and lord of Budapest. Under his direction, an NKVD system of house and block deputies was set up by which reports on the doings and opinions of every resident of the city were channeled to Communist headquarters.

A new note began to creep into Communist oratory. "Away with all ideas of bourgeois Western democracy!" the Red speakers cried. "We want a *people's* democracy!" To which mobs of new Party members roared their approval. The Communist Party, outlawed and insignificant before the war, seemed to be doubling its size daily. The reasons were not mysterious. The Russians were seizing citizens at random on the streets and shipping them eastward as "war prisoners": pos-

session of a red membership card in the Party was the one sure way to escape such attentions. Those who remained in Budapest had to help in the clean-up of the city's debris: Party members were exempt. The Communists, through Lord Mayor Vas, controlled food distribution: the red card was always good for a bag of potatoes. The multitude of petty civil servants knew that the public administration was slated to be purged of all "reactionary elements": what better defense, what better proof of democratic virtue, than a red card?

The Communists went out and recruited the ex-Nazis—who a few months earlier had been waving the Arrow Cross banner and drenching Budapest in a Jewish blood bath.

The Communists openly proclaimed that the "small, misguided" Nazis could not be blamed for the sins of their leaders. They even shopped for members in the camps opened by the Red Army for captured Arrow Crossmen. Recruiting was so brisk the Communists had a form printed up which a Nazi only needed to sign to be free. This form read as follows:

I, the undersigned, herewith declare that I was a member of the Arrow Cross Party from ——— to ———. I now realize that my activities were directed against the interests of the people and that my conduct was faulty. I am resolved to atone for what I have done. I promise to support the fight for a people's democracy with everything in my power and to devote my entire energy to the achievement of this task. I herewith solemnly pledge myself to be a faithful fighting member of the ——— branch of the Hungarian Communist Party.

When I asked Communist Boss Rakosi about this interesting state of affairs, he made no attempt to deny it. On the contrary, he considered it a very reasonable procedure. "Look," he said, leaning confidentially toward me in his luxuriously-carpeted office and speaking excellent English (he had been a clerk in an import-export firm in England), "these little fascists aren't bad fellows, really. They were forced into fascism, see. They were never active in it. All they have to do is sign a pledge, and we take them in. . . . After all, you can't jail six hundred thousand people."

This was quite possibly true—although it did not explain why "big" fascists like Arrow Cross colonels and Hungarian Gestapo officials were also welcomed into the Party. On the other hand, however, it was quite clear that Comrade Rakosi's doubts about the capacity of Hungarian prisons were elastic. These doubts did not seem to bother him at all when dealing with hundreds of thousands of persons who

were not ex-Nazis eager to embrace the faith but who were simply non-Communists seeking another road to salvation.

A POLICEMAN'S LOT CAN BE A HAPPY ONE

When the non-leftist members of the Debrecen Government were finally allowed into Budapest in April, they found the Political Police installed ahead of them as a super-government. The prewar governmental area on the Buda Hill was a shambles. A new governmental zone for the Debrecen ministries was developed in a cluster of buildings on and around Szabadsag Ter on the Pest side. The name, which means "Liberty Square," wanly reflected the Government's aspirations. In the succeeding months which led up to elections scheduled for October, the Political Police persistently operated above the law and in contempt of the Government. Neutral observers studying its activities at close hand could not miss the obvious: that the police was essentially a terroristic weapon being used by the Communists to smash potential opposition at the polls.

Such use of the police was in line with Hungarian tradition. The prewar police had been an instrument of the reactionary regimes, and the police of the Nazi Occupation period were even worse. Most of its personnel fled with the Germans. The rest were suspect. With so many collaborationists and fascists at large, the new authorities naturally hurried to recruit and train a fresh police force to hunt them down. This was an elementary precaution in defense of the new order of things. In their haste, the authorities managed to load the police, from top to bottom, with Communists.

After all, who could be more trusted to shield the fledgling State against reaction than the Communists? It was understandable that, in the emergency, the State Secretary in charge of police, and the Budapest Chief of Police—both Communists—should lean most heavily on their party comrades for recruits, with a sprinkling of reliable Social-Democrats added.

However, not all the Communists were Communists, as has been noted. Many were merely old fascists in new uniforms. And all of them, sudden converts or confirmed revolutionaries, were products of intolerance, schooled in the arts of club and gun, with no time for habeas corpus.

The main business of the police was the fight against reactionaries. Under this heading were lumped all Hungarians, including proven anti-Nazis, who looked as if they might be intending to thwart the will of the people as interpreted by Matyas Rakosi and the Soviet High Command. The top leaders of the Smallholder Party were left care-

fully unmolested. But lesser lights, and the rank and file, were fair game.

Victims were arrested without cause, interned without trial, and occasionally lost without trace. In special cases, suitable confessions were obtained. It was a notorious fact that the Political Police could get any confession it wished from any suspect, given enough time to work on him.

No. 60 Andrassy Street, main Budapest headquarters of the Political Police, became the most terrifying address in Hungary. Appropriately, it had been the headquarters of the Nazi Arrow Cross until the Communists moved in. The chief, General Gabor Peter, had been a tailor's apprentice before the war.

The most flagrant case of police murder occurred in April at the village of Gyömrő. Twenty-seven persons there were executed without any legal proceedings. They were simply taken from their homes one night, marched into the woods, shot and buried. Several of the victims were local dignitaries well-known as anti-Nazis. Several of the killers were equally well-known as former Arrow Cross thugs. The latter were arrested, kept out of sight until the scandal subsided, and then reinstated.

Relatives of the deceased went to Budapest demanding justice. The Premier himself wrote to Interior Minister Ferenc Erdei: "None of the victims were fascists. Some of them took part in the national resistance. Their relatives can ask the Government with justification whether this is the 'New Order' for which the murdered men risked their lives. . . ." Erdei thereupon frustrated all attempts by the families to exhume the bodies as evidence, prevented an investigation by the Public Prosecutor, and finally enlightened the Premier with the following classic of obfuscation:

These members of the Political Police endeavored to remove all elements which obstructed creation of a democratic nation. In the present case it is not possible to determine to what degree this removal was carried out illegally. The essential elements, which cannot be established, in relation to the undeterminable activities and individual responsibility, indisputably served the purpose of material justice in the minds of those who performed them. Neither is it open to dispute that, should it be possible to place individual responsibility in some connection or other, even if ground for such action existed, it could only be a question of formal execution of justice but there could be no question of justice in the higher sense. The final liquidation of such events, the fault of which cannot be established, can only be achieved by the granting of a general amnesty.

If the reader will take the trouble to decipher the prose masterpiece above, he will find that it means, in essence: "These murderers, if they are murderers, thought they were defending democracy. Punishing them wouldn't be fair, since they meant well. The best thing to do is to pardon them and everybody else who happens to make the same mistake, if it was a mistake...."

Such justification of all crime committed on the innocent, such dismissal of plain murder as a slight error in the inspired fight for democracy, was the pat defense of all the leftist leaders. I got it from Communist chief Rakosi, and from Socialist chief Arpad Szakasits (who fought for democracy during the German Occupation by hiding in a church and in the apartments of well-to-do friends) and finally I got it from Interior Minister Erdei himself.

Erdei was very young, only thirty-five, a handsome, flashing-eyed intellectual, who represented the Peasant Party on the strength of one published volume about the farm problem. He told me quite candidly that there were some ex-Nazis in the police force, but it was being corrected and wasn't serious. As demonstration of this, he pointed out that "we have the full confidence of the Soviet authorities." He permitted himself apologetically to twit me for thinking Hungary was ready for "your Anglo-Saxon ideas of democracy"—a suggestion which I had not made. "Anti-democratic ideas are too deep-rooted here," he said patiently. "We have to protect the masses, who are just starting out on the road to liberty. It is better to make mistakes occasionally than let one enemy of the regime escape."

But there was a difference between an enemy of the regime and a critic, I suggested. Didn't it seem to the Minister that the police were chasing the one as much as the other, and was that democratic, by Anglo-Saxon or any other definition?

Erdei's reply to this was classic. So classic, in fact, that I took it down verbatim and reproduce it here as a sample of the philosophy now bringing the light of freedom to darkened Hungary. He said:

"Intellectually, I agree with you. There *is* a difference between our enemies and our critics. But history does not deal in such nuances. For practical purposes, we have to simplify things. When we do this, critics become enemies. History and the masses will prove that we are right. We are having elections soon. The results will show whether our policy has correctly interpreted the will of the people. I go out every week end into the country and talk to them. I am confident we will win."

As Erdei had assured me, the Russians thought the Political Police was doing handsomely. The British and American military missions in Budapest did not share this view. Nor did the plain people I talked to, like the maid who cleaned my room, the waiter at the little bar around the corner, the news-dealer at the end of the street. All these people, and the leaders of the harassed Smallholder Party, looked to our representatives in Budapest for some action in defense of our fine phrases. They had a right to look to us, because we had two of the three seats on the Control Commission which was supposed to be running Hungary. Actually, however, Marshal Voroshilov and his deputy, Lieutenant General V. P. Sviridov, were in charge, and the two Allied Missions were monuments of concentrated frustration.

THE MARSHAL TRUMPS THE GENERALS

The primeval root of Allied futility in Hungary (and everywhere else in Russia's Europe) was our fear that Stalin might make a separate peace unless we agreed to his being Mr. Big in these territories for at least the period of hostilities with Germany. Later, during the crucial stage of political reconstruction, we might have recovered a part of what we had surrendered if we had not been obsessed by a second bugaboo: that Stalin would be difficult about a workable peace around the world if we seemed to be objecting to his kind of "security" for Russia in Eastern Europe. So we looked the other way while the Soviets tore up their pledges of democracy and tripartite co-operation in the territories under their dominion. In the end we were no nearer a world-wide settlement—and Russia was in a much better position to prevent one.

The Armistice with the Hungarians was dictated in Moscow to delegates of the puppet Debrecen Government. The Hungarians pledged themselves "to carry out all instructions and orders" of the Allied High Command. This was eminently proper, since Hungary was a defeated country not yet formally at peace with its conquerors. But the phrase "Allied High Command" had the word "Soviet" stuck coyly in the middle of it, in brackets, thus: "Allied (Soviet) High Command." Nowhere in the Russian, English or Hungarian texts of the Armistice was this term clarified or defined.

What did it mean? How many parts of "Allied" and how many parts of "Soviet" were to be mixed in this "High Command"? Were the Soviets to be spokesman for the others, or supreme over them? Anglo-American failure to set this straight was too glaring to be shrugged off as incompetence or absentmindedness.

The answer is that the democracies did not want to insist on sharp definitions while hostilities were still on. They regarded the Armistice as a military arrangement. The text, filled with stipulations of what Hungary would be obliged to do for the duration of the war, bore this out. The Allies counted on future Soviet reasonableness for a just settlement of internal east European problems. They counted on Yalta.

Three weeks after the Armistice signature, the Russians agreed at Yalta "to *concert* the policies (of the Big Three) in assisting the peoples liberated from the domination of Nazi Germany, *and the peoples of the former Axis satellite states*, to solve by democratic means their pressing political and economic problems." Russia at Yalta also agreed that the three Allies would "*jointly*" assist such peoples "to establish conditions of internal peace, to form interim governmental authorities broadly representative of all democratic elements . . . and pledged to the earliest possible establishment through free elections of governments responsive to the will of the people, and to facilitate where necessary the holding of such elections."

Unfortunately, the Yalta Declaration was a general document, a broad statement of principle. The Hungarian Armistice was a specific document, a hard instrument of practical procedures. And the Russians, as our side was slowly to discover, are a very practical people.

In addition to Yalta, there was another clear proof that we regarded liberation as a two-phased operation. While the war was on, the Russians, who were doing the land-fighting on the soil of Hungary, obviously needed untrammelled and trigger-quick control of forces and communications. Accordingly, we acknowledged that our representatives to the Allied Control Commission would take a back seat in the *first* phase of the Occupation. *Until the close of the German war*, it was agreed that the British and American members of the ACC would have no part in the Commission's decisions, and would merely be informed of all actions the Russians took in the Commission's name.

The two Allied missions, in fact, were not permitted into Debrecen until late in February, 1945, nearly two months after the formation of the Provisional Government. A close watch was put on them. They had virtually no contact with Hungarian politicians. They ran into obstructions even in purely military matters, such as collecting and caring for the surviving crews of Allied planes which crashed or landed in Hungary while bombing the enemies of the Russians along the Eastern Front. The Soviets tended to regard such fliers as suspicious characters and their planes as legitimate war booty. On one occasion, the American mission had to sneak a convoy of jeeps around the back

of barracks where some fliers were being held, and "steal" them out through the windows.

Contrary to their agreement, the Russians neglected to keep the Allied missions informed of what the "Allied (Soviet) High Command" was doing. They convoked only one meeting of the ACC. They delayed the arrival of the Allied Missions in Budapest for two months after the capital's liberation, even longer than they delayed the arrival of the Debrecen Government.

After the sixth of May and the German surrender, we considered a change in ACC regulations was richly due. The chief of the U. S. Mission, Major-General William S. Key, was ordered home to Washington to help draft new terms. Before he left, Marshal Voroshilov, Soviet chairman, convened a second meeting of the ACC, and invited Key to present his views. Key proposed that all ACC matters concerning the Hungarians should henceforth be decided jointly by the three Commissioners, that Voroshilov should be permanent chairman and that Key and Major-General Oliver P. Edgcumbe, the British Commissioner, should alternate in the chair during his absence. The Marshal thanked Key kindly for his suggestions.

Key flew off to Washington in mid-June. At the State Department he found a receptive audience for his ideas. He was told that revision of the ACC statutes would come up on the Potsdam agenda. Back he went to Budapest. On July 12th, before the Big Three had reached Potsdam, he and his British colleague received identical letters from Voroshilov. In view of the war's end, wrote the Marshal, the Soviet Government "finds it necessary to establish" new rules for the ACC. (This was a unilateral decision, without any agreement between the Russians and the others.) ACC meetings would henceforth occur at least once every ten days. They would discuss and reach agreement on the "most important questions" concerning Allied relations with the Hungarians. The Russian chairman would issue appropriate orders to the Budapest Government.

But no definition was offered for "most important questions." The Russians would alone decide what to place before the Anglo-Americans and what to settle outside the ACC directly with the Hungarians. In other words, Voroshilov would continue to rule Hungary in the name, and in spite, of the Allied Control Commission.

Key politely declined to accept this suave plan and sat back to wait for good news from the Potsdam conference. When the Big Three met later in July, however, the Soviets held the initiative because of the Voroshilov proposal. (Similar letters had been sent to the Allied mis-

sions in Rumania and Bulgaria.) President Truman and Prime Minister Attlee, like their predecessors, committed the error of signing a communiqué which failed to spell out the precise terms of their agreement with Stalin. The Potsdam announcement merely said that revision of the ACC statutes "would now be undertaken," with the Soviet proposals "as a basis."

Ordinarily, this ought to have been clear enough. It meant that Voroshilov's letter would be the springboard for negotiations. General Key therefore prepared for an invitation from his Russian colleague to come around and talk things over. But he forgot the Soviet genius for textual interpretation. To Key's astonishment, a note from the Marshal announced that since Potsdam had accepted the Russian proposal "as a basis for the ACC statutes," the Russian proposal was henceforth in effect!

The mortified American general cabled Washington. He was assured that Potsdam had *not* accepted the Soviet plan. He was advised to go ahead and present his counterproposals.

Voroshilov refused to discuss them. He insisted Potsdam had settled the question. Key, a Midwestern politician and former warden of the Oklahoma State Penitentiary, got tough too. He told Voroshilov he would have no part of the Soviet *Diktat*, since it conflicted with his instructions from Washington. He appealed to the State Department for its support.

The Department queried Moscow. There Ambassador Harriman made some calls, then reported to Washington that it would do no good to press the matter. (When Key later flew up to Moscow for a visit, Harriman told him that attempts to get the Russians to listen to reason on the ACC business had been like "butting my head against a stone wall.") The State Department notified Key of its sympathy for his desire to make tripartite collaboration work in Hungary. It expressed its conviction that the Russians were misinterpreting the Potsdam Agreement. It advised Key to drop the subject because of "higher considerations."

And there the matter stood. All that the American and British members of the ACC could do thereafter was express their opposition whenever they found out—sometimes from the Hungarian press—that the Russian member had issued orders to the Hungarian Government without consulting them. It was a battle fought merely for the record. In actual practice, the Russians did exactly as they pleased.

They did exactly as they pleased, not only with the Hungarians, but also with the Anglo-Americans. They prohibited Allied officers from

traveling outside the capital without special individual passes obtainable only from the Russians and precisely listing every town in the itinerary. They screened all applications for entry into Hungary, delaying all and rejecting many. They required all Allied planes to obtain special clearance for each member of the crew and for each individual flight. Every plane coming down on the suburban cow pasture which the Russians assigned the Americans as their Budapest airfield had to have its flight number painted on the fuselage or it could not land. They refused to permit construction of a shack on the pasture to shelter the waiting ground staff from freezing in the winter and frying in the summer.

The Russians took over the American-owned oil fields at Lisper and pumped them ruinously for oil which they appropriated and checked off against Hungary's reparations account at absurdly low prices. They compelled a communications equipment plant near Budapest, Standard Electric, to work exclusively on Soviet reparations orders. They established a censorship over foreign correspondence—despite the Big Three's assurances at Potsdam that Allied newsmen would "enjoy full freedom to report to the world upon developments in . . . Hungary." Finally, they put spies on the tails of the correspondents, and spies inside the Allied missions, and even bribed cooks, butlers and chauffeurs to turn in reports on their Anglo-American employers.

These were relatively minor indignities, personally obnoxious but no great hazard to the advancement of mankind. The Russians could argue, and did, that they were merely following our precedent created in Italy, where we had put restrictions on them. Technically, this was true, though our petty annoyances in Italy were as nothing compared with the interminable red tape, bad manners and frequent brutality of Russian behavior in their Hungarian preserve.

The real tragedy of Anglo-American impotence was that it shriveled whatever meager hope liberty might have had to flourish in Hungary. That unhappy land was admittedly a breeding-ground for fascism. But the remedy hardly was to plant the seeds of another kind of totalitarianism. Hungary had its democrats too, men who had fought the old regime as bravely as the Communists had, and who were still on their feet, straining to make good. But what chance did they have—opposed by fanatic dogmas, terrorized by a police system which had behind it and on Hungarian soil the army of the strongest military power in Europe? How could they stand up boldly against these when they could see their only friends, the representatives of the democracies,

discredited daily and pushed aside despite the enormous contributions of the West to Russian military victory?

ACC came to mean Allied *Controlled* Commission. To the Hungarians, the Allied missions seemed little more than consular offices, always in a flurry of chasing after visas for arriving and departing Anglo-Americans, but useless (and dangerous) to appeal to for help against the supreme and almighty Russians.

Even so, the democracies had another channel for aid and comfort to the groups which, though weak and bullied, were the only advocates in Hungary of a nontotalitarian way of life. Each Military Mission had a separate Political Mission, headed by an envoy with the personal rank of Minister. These Political Missions, theoretically, were merely advisors to their respective Military Missions. It was a convenient fiction. In reality, they represented the power and authority of the British Foreign Office and the American Department of State. These latter organisms still counted for something in Hungary, in spite of their inhibitions. They counted for so much, in fact, that in late September, 1945, a brief note delivered by U. S. Political Advisor H. Arthur Schoenfeld, career diplomat, was able to obtain "free and unfettered" elections for Hungary despite the presence of over a half-million Russian troops.

BALLOT-BOX MUTINY

The Budapest elections were only a month away when I arrived. Starting with the Social-Democrats, whom I regarded in my innocence as the traditionally liberal group between reactionary Smallholders and revolutionary Communists, I talked my way in both directions through the leadership and lower levels of all the parties. As my bundle of notes grew, my expectations fell. I had arrived eager to report good things about the Russians and disagreeable things about their critics. But I was also fresh from my Yugoslav adventures, and my ear was peeled for paradoxes.

I was compelled to observe that the Soviet-sponsored Communists were raising an abnormal amount of din about purging the fascists, but that fascists with Communist Party cards were still occupying shops and flats stolen from the Jews. The Hungarian press under Red Army Occupation was described as free, but an editor was jailed for publishing the texts of speeches by President Truman and Foreign Secretary Bevin. I watched the rubber-stamp Parliament "vote" unlimited emergency financial and executive powers to the Government after exactly twelve seconds of discussion. I had to record that the Social-Democratic Party was split down the middle: the Russians openly favored its left-

wing leader, whose claims to his new eminence were somewhat obscure; the moderate Socialist leader, Karoly Peyer, whom the Russians ignored, had only lately emerged from the Nazi concentration camp at Mauthausen.

It was impossible to avoid discovering that the elections were being held so soon, despite the obvious chaos throughout the country, because the Russians were insisting on them—and expecting their favorites to benefit from the chaos. Nor was it hard to detect that a reign of terror was making it hopeless for anyone but the Leftist bloc to try effective campaigning.

"Eljen Rakosi" (Hurrah for Rakosi) was smeared over the walls and fences of Hungary. Nowhere did I see an *eljen* for Zoltan Tildy, liberal Protestant pastor who headed the Smallholder Party, or an *eljen* for his Smallholder colleague, Ferenc Nagy, self-educated peasant, lifelong opponent of Horthy. The Communists and fellow-travelers roared around town in Red Army limousines and trucks; the Smallholders used the trams or walked. Armed leftist gangs were breaking up "reactionary" campaign meetings in the provinces. The Political Police were packing the internment camps with a remarkable number of citizens who all happened to be non-Marxists. There was at this time an extra reason to speed the arrests. The electoral law just railroaded through Parliament stipulated that all persons in the custody of the Political Police—the sentenced, the indicted, and the merely suspected—were not to be allowed to vote.

Hungary's "democratic experiment" under Soviet auspices came closer to collapse at that moment than was known then or is publicly known even today. Tildy, the Smallholder chief, a prudent little man with no romantic notions about Soviet benevolence, was inclined to suffer in silence. His livid fear was that the Russians would tighten the screws on reparations if anybody annoyed them. But Tildy's lieutenants were hardier souls. They resented his timidity. They were gathering up their indignation for a demand on him to withdraw the three Smallholder ministers from the coalition, proclaim a boycott of the elections and summon the Powers to apply the Yalta Agreement.

This was something the Russians keenly wanted to forestall, a similar move by the Opposition in Bulgaria having already caused them considerable embarrassment. When a desperate Tildy finally arose in Parliament and asked for a little more democratic behavior from the democracy-loving Communists, the latter staged a simulated retreat. The electoral law was toned down. The leftist press softened its daily cries for reactionary blood.

But out in the provinces, heads continued to knock together, and in Budapest Red Army soldiers helped put up Hungarian Communist posters. Nobody would have given a plugged pengő for the likelihood that on Election Day there would be an unterrorized vote and an honest vote count.

Nobody, that is, before September 22nd. On that day, the American Political Mission delivered a note to the Provisional Government. The United States, said the note, was prepared to recognize that Government—provided it gave assurances of free elections and took all possible steps to guarantee the right of free speech and assembly for all democratic parties.

The Washington move caught the Russians off base. At that very moment, in London, a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers was bogging down into total deadlock over this same question of recognizing the governments in Russia's Europe. Messrs. Byrnes and Bevin had rejected Mr. Molotov's assurances that Hungary, Rumania and Bulgaria were well-launched on the democratic way and therefore worthy of recognition. But now here was the United States cannily offering recognition—in exchange for an honest vote.

Marshal Voroshilov was not sure whether he ought to chuckle or weep. Allied recognition was what the Soviets dearly wanted for their ex-Nazi satellites, to break the diplomatic ice around the puppet governments and make them respectable (after which all varieties of profitable treaties could be concluded between them and the USSR, without the Allies being able to demur). But the Russians had not reckoned on one of the Allies beating them to the punch and winning the gratitude of these defeated countries by being the *first* to recognize one of them.

The Marshal thereupon performed a very neat trick. Premier Miklos, as soon as he had digested the American note, summoned a cabinet meeting to draw up a favorable and joyful reply, assuring Washington of all guarantees for a free election. But Voroshilov "suggested" a postponement of the session—and no statements to the press about the existence of the American note. Meanwhile he used his direct telephone line to Stalin. Consternation in Moscow. Miklos again moved to summon the cabinet, and was again told by Voroshilov to hold off. On the third day after the American note's arrival the cabinet finally met. In the middle of the deliberations, the Marshal suddenly arrived and called the Premier out. Fifteen minutes of animated conversation in the corridor. Miklos then re-entered the cabinet room and informed his colleagues that the Soviet Union had granted full, unconditional

recognition to the Hungarian Provisional Government. . . . After that, the cabinet was permitted to accept the American offer.

In extra editions of that afternoon's papers, the Soviet recognition was banner-headlined. Announcement of the American move appeared in a small sub-head. Every possible dodge was used to make it seem that Washington had rushed to imitate Moscow's example, instead of the other way around.

But it didn't matter much who got credit for what. What counted was the effect this sudden display of initiative from Washington had on events. And this effect was sensational. Voroshilov had quiet words with Rakosi. They agreed that, the preparatory work having assured success at the polls, not a leaf must stir to give the Americans an excuse to back out from recognition. The Political Police entered a period of well-earned rest. On Election Sunday, October 7th, I drove around Budapest the entire day without seeing a single Russian soldier, and I visited a dozen polling places without finding a single irregularity.

The result was, that the voters of Budapest, first city in Russia's Europe to express its real feelings under democratic safeguards, gave the anti-Communist Smallholder Party a landslide 51-per-cent majority over the combined totals of all three parties in the leftist bloc.

The special sensation in the thunderous verdict was the fact that this was a Budapest municipal election, not a Hungarian national election. The national election was scheduled for a month later. The Communists had insisted on holding the Budapest contest first because they had confidently expected Budapest—largest industrial proletariat concentration in all Hungary—to point the way for the rest of the country by turning in a thumping victory for the parties of the New Order.

For several days the self-appointed and now disavowed representatives of the people walked about groggy. At Social-Democratic headquarters, where I visited on the morning after announcement of the returns, the air was particularly heavy with the odor of ashes and sack-cloth. The Socialists had been seduced by their left wing to run on a united ticket with the Communists. The moderates in the party had pleaded that the two proletarian parties should run separately, because that would reflect more democratically the relative strength of each. But they had been overruled by Szakasits, yes-man of Voroshilov—and now it appeared that they had been right.

As the days went by, the conviction grew that the Socialists campaigning by themselves would have received more votes than they and

the disreputable Communists received together. Four days after the Budapest debacle, the Socialists' Political Committee announced that the party would enter the November national election on an independent ticket.

But before that election came off, there was to be another surprise—less spontaneous than the one sprung by the voters of Budapest, and less agreeable.

ULTIMATUM

The surprise was a Communist-Soviet maneuver to dispense with the elections altogether.

It almost succeeded. That it failed, by an imperceptible margin, was demonstrably due to a last-minute rebellion by the Smallholder Party. This rebellion would never have found its courage without the supporting clamor which arose from BBC and the American short-wave radio. And the Allied radios would never have started the uproar if the foreign press had not sent the news of the projected coup out of the country. The foreign press consisted of one man at that noisy moment in Hungarian history—me.

I mention my part in this affair because it belongs to the story. I claim no credit for the good luck of happening to be in the right place at the right time. Nor am I soliciting a pat on the back for the more modest achievement of having scored a scoop. The story of "Voroshilov's ultimatum" was not an exclusive. A number of other correspondents then in Budapest had it. But these correspondents couldn't file it. They were "stringers," local representatives of foreign newspapers and agencies. They were Hungarians. They knew that if they cabled a single word about the "ultimatum" they might just as well sign it with a farewell. I didn't run that risk. The worst that could happen to me was expulsion. The story seemed worth it.

The plot began, a week after the municipal elections described above, with a return to life of the Soviet-controlled press.

Hitherto Moscow Radio and the Hungarian leftist papers had been feebly trying to rationalize the crushing defeat as a demonstration of Communist-Soviet freedom and therefore as a blow to reaction. But now the Communist *Szabad Nep* hinted darkly of a general strike against the "fascists" who had dared to thwart the people's will at the Budapest polls.

The "workers" obligingly came into the streets, parading with toy gallows from which dangled the sawdust bodies of the bourgeois reac-

tion. There were several factory walkouts, of the "spontaneous" kind at which the Communists excel. Rumors were floated that the Reds were stacking thousands of Russian rifles in Csepel, Újpest and other Budapest suburbs. "If we don't get a majority," a ragged embryo commissar promised his fellow passengers and me in a tram one day, "then we'll shoot the majority." Trouble broke out again in the provinces. The pre-electoral honeymoon was over.

I cabled a dry, factual summary. (By this time I was filing to the liberal London *News Chronicle*, having parted company with *PM*.) BBC put the dispatch into its short-wave Hungarian-language newscast. Reconstruction Minister Ferenc Nagy, a Smallholder, protested at a cabinet meeting that Communist musclemen had prevented him from addressing a provincial rally at Szolnok; in other towns, campaigners were beaten up, one man shot, another stabbed and a third deprived of an eye. The next day I cabled this too. After listening to the British broadcasts, Budapest reporters went to quiz Interior Minister Erdei. "The electoral meetings," he told them, "are a bit heated in spirit, but I have received no reports about armed clashes. As for the arrests of politicians, I can also state that no such reports have reached me."

Communist leader Rakosi conferred with Marshal Voroshilov. Comrade Rakosi then flew to Moscow, where in harder times he had served on the inner committee of the Comintern. Back to Budapest, for more talk with Voroshilov. A meeting with wily Father Balogh, the obscure "Smallholder" spokesman of Debrecen days who had mysteriously continued high in party councils. Then Voroshilov summoned the leaders of the political parties.

The nationwide unrest, he told them, was causing him great concern. Was a heated electoral campaign advisable at such a time? Would it not be wiser for all the coalition parties to agree among themselves on how many seats each should have in the new Parliament? The distribution of seats might give the Smallholders almost—but not quite—an absolute majority. Then all the parties could present themselves, at a later date, to the people on a single "common list," without competition. Otherwise there might be "anarchy and civil war," mused the Marshal, in which case the Red Army could not stand idly by.

Tildy, the Smallholder chief, had already been worrying about the perils of high office if his party won as big a victory in the national elections as in Budapest. After the Voroshilov interview, he came home in a panic. He gave his party associates a horrendous prophecy of Communist uprisings, Red Army ousting of the Provisional Government for "failure to maintain order," and creation of a purely leftist regime.

This, his terrified colleagues agreed, was the clear meaning of Voroshilov's little speech. Hungarian democracy would be deadlier than ever. Certainly a continuation of the present coalition and puppet Parliament, with redistribution of portfolios and seats, was better than that. The Smallholders could see no way out except to yield.

The Voroshilov interview occurred late Tuesday, October 16th. Thursday evening BBC carried an item datelined Budapest from that morning's *News Chronicle* (filed to London via American Army radio, therefore uncensored). Next day the "Voice of America" in New York picked it up. Then BBC amplified it. Commentators on both sides of the Atlantic went to work on it. Harsh words flooded into the receiving sets of Hungarian radio listeners.

The response was immediate. Britain and the United States, the enraptured Hungarians told themselves, were at last speaking out. The democracies wanted elections, were demanding elections. From the Hungarian grass roots, cries of indignation against Smallholder surrender to the Communists began echoing into Budapest. Comrades Rakosi and Szakasits commenced to perspire visibly. The official press, compelled to lift its conspiracy of silence about the projected sell-out, tried to gloss it over by vague references to negotiations for a "parliamentary truce" which would avoid the "dangers" of a campaign. But by now the cat was too far out of the bag. Provincial Smallholder leaders set up a shout for an emergency party congress. Tildy's lieutenants joined in the clamor. Faced by threat of a party revolt against him, Tildy had to give way. The party congress convened on October 23rd. One thousand delegates voted by acclamation for full democratic elections, as scheduled.

But Voroshilov had already capitulated. It was no longer possible to fob his little plan off on the Allies as a voluntary and democratic decision of the Hungarian parties. The "common list" idea died ignominiously two days before the Smallholder congress, when the official Communist newspaper glumly declared: "The Anglo-Saxon press and radio have taken violent exception and threatened to cancel the recognition they recently promised. . . . Today it seems almost certain that the efforts of all the parties to have a 'common list' will come to nothing. . . ."

So, on a second Election Sunday, November 4th, after another campaign wind-up almost as tranquil as the first, all Hungary went to the polls. In the provinces, only minor disorders occurred. In Budapest, under the eyes of Allied observers, the Red Army once more was on its best behavior and invisible. The results: a 57-per-cent majority for the Smallholders—245 seats for them in the new Parliament. The

Communists received 70 seats; the Socialists, still paying for their unforgotten alliance with the Communists, received 69. As for the National Peasants, long known to the real peasantry as a bucolic stooge for the Communists, the Hungarian electorate, which is more than 50 per cent agricultural, gave them less than 6 per cent of the votes.

WINNER TAKE HALF

Having obtained a thumping big mandate in a miraculously democratic election, the Smallholder Party now proceeded to give away everything it had won.

The "will of the people," about which Communists everywhere claim to have uncanny powers of prediction, had unmistakably voted the Smallholders absolute control in the new Parliament and the right to form a majority Government. They chose instead to hand over the more important half of the posts in the new Cabinet to the Communist bloc—which had just been repudiated by the Hungarian voters.

Publicly, this unnatural performance was explained as a patriotic necessity to maintain the "national unity" created at Debrecen. The coalition must be preserved, it was said, to meet the stark economic crisis confronting the country.

The truth was that the betrayal of the verdict at the polls was the price the majority Smallholders had to pay in order to keep the minority leftists from provoking a Russian-approved civil war. Despite their electoral triumph, the moderates could not govern the country. A year of unimpeded infiltration had given the extreme Left control of the police, the provincial administrations, the trade unions, and a large part of the civil service. Simultaneously, a year of Soviet Occupation had broadened and deepened the economic and financial pit in which Hungary labored. The Communists had their best organizations in the cities—and cities are the traditional fever spots of revolt. A few disciplined and determined men can arouse a whole population. The demonstrations after the Budapest elections had been a staged rehearsal of Communist power to channelize unrest. As Rakosi had cynically announced on Election Eve: "We can always order the comrades into the street. Meanwhile, the ballot is also a weapon."

Political blackmail was the real cause of the surrender. The Smallholder capitulation took place, in fact, even before the elections came off. On October 23rd, a joint communiqué of the four-party coalition announced that the coalition would be retained no matter which party won the elections. The communiqué neglected to say that the

portfolios were to be *equally* divided. It also omitted to point out that this was, in reality, a compact to hold democratic elections and then disregard their results.

Thus, though Voroshilov's "ultimatum" had failed in the sense that the elections did occur and a Smallholder Parliament was created, the Marshal could take distinct pleasure from the fact that this would make no difference whatsoever in the governing of the country.

In the Government formed after eleven days of post-election parleys, Smallholder leader Tildy became Premier—but Rakosi and Szakasits, the Communist and Social-Democratic leaders, became Vice-Premiers. Nine cabinet votes went to the Smallholders, and nine to the leftists—but the latter took all the posts that mattered. Communists became the Ministers of Interior (in charge of police), of Transport, and of Public Welfare; Social Democrats became the Ministers of Justice (in charge of trial and punishment), of Industry and of Commerce. A National Peasant became Minister of Education.

The Smallholders (who, it must be stressed again, had won the elections) not only accepted the second-grade ministries like Information and War, but they also allowed themselves to be saddled with the most vulnerable ministries. These were the jobs most at the mercy of the hopeless economic situation. The Finance Minister, for example, would be expected to halt the inflation while the Russians printed unlimited amounts of currency; the Supply Minister would have to feed starving Budapest when there was a food shortage throughout the country. If the situation grew worse, popular indignation could be skillfully directed against the Smallholders. For who but the Smallholders would be to blame? Hadn't they been elected to solve these problems?

Rescue (or if rescue was already too late, at least encouragement to stand fast for a better bargain) could have come only from British and American diplomacy.

Washington failed to follow through on the realistic line skillfully established by its note offering recognition in exchange for honest elections. If the United States had now stoutly proclaimed that honest elections also meant honest execution of the people's decision, it would have demonstrated to all interested parties, including the Russians, that the Americans took their Yalta pledges seriously. This might conceivably not have changed Soviet policy in Hungary at that late date. But pressure could also have been exerted on the Russians in other ways, outside Hungary. In any case, a vigorous American de-

nunciation of the post-elections farce would have bolstered Hungarian courage and American prestige.

But the State Department in this period was deep in its policy of sacrificing smaller objectives, which might have been saved, in a chase after larger objectives which were strictly dream-world. The folly of being "reasonable" with the Russians, of giving them sugar so that they too would be reasonable and not make off with the cake, was a high fashion in Washington. In Budapest, the competent Mr. Schoenfeld went as far as he dared in oral assurances of American devotion to democracy in Central Europe, but he could offer the moderates no public backing, and he had no authority to sound off against the Russians. "It is our policy," he told me in tones carefully measured to conceal his private feelings, "not to confuse local infringements of democracy with the larger international issues." After the elections, he was duly accredited as U. S. Minister to Budapest, and full diplomatic relations were resumed as if the new coalition Government had the heartiest kind of American approval.

As for the British, they too behaved as if it was normal democratic procedure to ignore the results of elections. True, A. D. G. Gascoigne, the chief of Britain's Political Mission (which was unjustly dubbed "Sleepy Hollow" by erudite Hungarians) had been in a high undiplomatic rage when I checked with him on the day the American note offering recognition was announced. He thought the move irregular ("you simply can't have full diplomatic relations with chaps against whom you're still at war") and futile ("I shan't be impressed by an election as long the the Government it produces has to sit on a Russian bayonet"). At the time, I must admit, I merely thought Gascoigne a bit miffed because Washington had played smartly ahead of London, but our subsequent loss of ardor proved him not so wrong. However, his superiors in Whitehall showed no more gumption later than did Schoenfeld's on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Failure to hold a firm political line, to make up our minds on what we had at stake and then defend it, lowered joint Anglo-American stock almost beyond redemption. To the Hungarians we became spinners of fine words but feeble reeds to lean on in emergencies. When we did finally begin to toughen up toward the end of 1946, after another year of Communist operations, the Russians felt secure enough to tell us that it was none of our business. Our resistance came too little and too late. Our diplomatic notes descended on Budapest thick, fast and impotent. Even the Hungarian moderates, by this time pretty groggy from continuous living just one step and hop beyond

jail, contemptuously took to referring to each of our paper protests as "another one of these letters from the West." Hungary's "Elder Statesman," Count Michael Karolyi, Premier of the short-lived 1918-19 Republic which went down because the Allies of those days also failed to support the few real live democrats in Hungary and even intrigued against them, put it another way. "Hungary," he told me, "has become a country without a West. On our Western frontiers there is a vacuum. We are a country which only has an East."

COMMUNIST SURGEONS, PARLIAMENTARY OPERATION

On February 1, 1946, the kingless Kingdom of Hungary, last souvenir of the old feudal rigmarole, was abolished by Parliament and a new Hungarian Republic proclaimed. Sad-faced little Zoltan Tildy, the ex-preacher, was elevated to the eminence of the Presidency. Ferenc Nagy, his chief lieutenant in the Smallholder Party, stepped into Tildy's Prime-Ministerial shoes.

I had gotten to know both these men well in the fighting days of the electoral campaigns, when they were still resilient, still hopeful of being able to lead Hungary to something better than another species of tyranny. But when I returned to Hungary in June, 1946, after six months away, Tildy was inaccessible on his Presidential country estate, no longer seeing correspondents. A tired, dispirited, lonely man, his friends told me. Premier Nagy had just returned from an unsuccessful diplomatic expedition to America, to find a fresh maze of intrigues and counterplots which had piled up in his absence. He finally authorized me to visit him, but between the evening of his invitation and the morning of my arrival, another crisis with the Communists had broken out. When I entered the Premier's antechamber, he was busy for another hour. Then the Premier appeared at the door, grasped my hand, pulled me nervously into his office, shut the door tight, and apologized in one quick breath both for keeping me waiting and for not being able to give me an interview, after all.

"The situation is too delicate, too delicate," he said. "Ah, if I could tell you what is in my heart, how much I could tell you!" He changed the subject, asking me for a few minutes about my trip to Rumania and Bulgaria. Then he led me abruptly to the door. "You are going soon to America? How fortunate for you! How happy you must be, after all this, to be able to return to America! America!" He sighed and sent me away. I have seen numerous Premiers and Presidents, some of them in varying states of controlled agitation, but never one so harassed and sick of his job as poor Ferenc Nagy of Hungary.

From the day the Hungarian Republic was born, and continuously down to the moment of this writing, Budapest rocked with one political "crisis" after another. Sometimes, there was a new crisis per month. All these crises arose out of Communist refusal to give the Smallholders, who had much better than half the votes of the nation, a bare half of the authority to govern the nation. The Communists, who to this day possess no genuine mass following in the country, had one unique aim: to make Hungary so safe for themselves that the assistance of the Red Army would no longer be required. To achieve such security the Communists needed ultimately to have an election, but one on the Tito model—with only their side voting.

Three major obstacles blocked Comrade Rakosi's path. He already had the police, the provincial town and village councils, the trade unions (with the help of Socialist Comrade Szakasits, his fellow Vice-Premier) and a good chunk of the civil service. But he needed more of the civil service, all of the army and better than half of Parliament.

During the Debrecen and early Budapest phases of the Provisional Government the public administration had been vigorously purged. A clean-up was undeniably necessary, since the bureaucracy had been a stronghold of old-fashioned reaction. However, except in the cases of some glaringly pro-fascist officials, those selected for purging were tapped because they were now pro-Allied rather than pro-Russian, and spared were those willing to accept enlightenment from the East. Vacant places were taken by recruits from the leftist parties.

After the elections, the Left resumed the offensive. The Communist Interior Minister declared that his biggest job was to "liquidate reaction in the civil service." Moscow Radio backed this up, in almost identical words, by demanding a "purge in the state apparatus of reaction." A Government Commissariat was created to review the records of officials. But, again, the trouble was the partisan one-sidedness of the purge. In addition, all the leftist ministers treated their ministries as job-gardens for faithful followers. By the middle of 1947, close to 80 per cent of the bureaucracy, national and regional, was of Marxist persuasion.

Simultaneously the cadres in the Army—cut to 65,000 men by the peace treaty—were pruned with the same knife. Officers were retired on half pay, or no pay at all, according to their proclivity for swiveling East or West. The Frontier guards, only effective armed military force left to Hungary after her defeat, had a Communist wearer of a Red Army decoration as their commanding general. The Political De-

partment of the War Ministry was headed by a Communist, previously chief of the Budapest police. New "orientation" courses for the military, Soviet-style, took care of political enlightenment in all ranks.

Parliament was a bit harder to grasp because the elections had brought in 245 Smallholders, to only 162 Communists, Social-Democrats and Peasants. It was obviously necessary to whittle down this gap. (There were also a dozen Independents and a few recalcitrant Peasants and moderate Socialists, but they could be tended to later.) In one way or another, the Smallholder Party would have to be diminished, demoralized and broken into fragments. "Atomized" was the technical phrase in vogue.

The first offensive to trim the Smallholders down to size came as soon as the Republic had been safely proclaimed, when the air was still ringing with leftist pledges of devotion to the "national union" Government. The Communists demanded the ouster of some eighty Smallholder deputies for being "revisionists and reactionaries." After much alarums, including a "demonstration" by 200,000 Budapest workers, the affair was settled (or so it was thought) when twenty of the accused deputies resigned from membership in the majority party, though retaining their parliamentary seats. The leader of the group, Dezso Sulyok, a conservative but a longtime anti-fascist, formed a new party on the extreme right of Parliament.

Skirmishes continued through the Summer of 1946. On charges of "anti-democratic activities," the Political Police dragnet pulled in thousands of suspects. These operations were facilitated by a law authorizing death for anyone attempting to overthrow the democratic republic and internment "if there is reasonable cause to believe, though insufficient legal evidence to prove, that a person is carrying on anti-democratic activities."

Full-scale attack was resumed against the majority with the end of the Paris Peace Conference in October, 1946. Strategically, it was a counteroffensive to repeated Smallholder demands for factory, municipal and regional elections. These had never been held, the Left having packed the mayoralties, village councils and trade-union committees with their own stalwarts during the hectic period of Liberation. The Left now professed itself ready for such elections, if first a new electoral law disfranchised "all fascists and reactionaries" and the Smallholders expelled more reactionaries from their party.

The real purpose of all this was disclosed on October 23rd by Vice-Premier Szakasits: "If the Smallholder Party really wants democracy, it must renounce the hope of governing with a Smallholder majority!"

Bullied, the Smallholders fell back. Three Smallholder cabinet ministers and an Under-secretary of Justice were replaced by minor personalities more acceptable to the Left. All of which was mere prelude to the rabbit punch administered in mid-December, when the Left suddenly unearthed the biggest and best of all "conspiracies" to date.

This was a plot, the world was asked to believe, whereby right-wing Smallholders and others proposed to overthrow their own Smallholder coalition government and restore Admiral Horthy the instant the Soviet Occupation Army left Hungary.

The truth seems to have been (according to later evidence not published in Hungary) that there were at least two "plots," not just one. The first was really a conspiracy to take fire and sword to the Communists at the first possible moment after the Soviet departure. The conspirators, however, were old-regime army officers, dispossessed landlords and other Horthyite elements. It was a harebrained scheme concocted by irresponsible men—and the Smallholder Party had nothing to do with it. The second "plot," in which some Smallholders participated and of which their party leaders probably had knowledge, was not a plot at all, but an embryo plan for counteraction in case the Communists attempted a *putsch* when the Red Army had gone. In other words, it was a defensive scheme to *prevent* overthrow of the government by the Left, and not a conspiracy by the Smallholders to overthrow themselves. The Left, however, was not abashed by such discrepancies, and proceeded in virtuous indignation to demand and obtain the utter ruin of the Smallholder majority.

The Communist Political Police and the Communist Political Section of the War Ministry arrested fifty-five Smallholders and some hundred other miscellaneous political figures and former or active army officers. In the uproar created by the banner-headlining of increasingly fantastic charges, the leftist bloc rose to its supreme effort. Vice-Premier Szakasits repudiated the 1945 landslide vote of the Smallholders as an "arithmetical illusion." Socialists and Communists served a "final" warning on the Smallholders to get rid of the reactionaries whose votes gave them their "unnatural electoral victory." Said Szakasits: "Electoral arithmetic cannot form the basis of our political life!"

Under this pressure, with the Russian military authorities backing the Left to the limit, Premier Nagy cracked up. Some twenty more Smallholder deputies were kicked out. Eight of them, shorn of their parliamentary immunity by their own party, were arrested by the

Hungarian police for alleged complicity in the "conspiracy" (a parliamentary and Allied investigation of which was refused). Three more Smallholder ministers were compelled to resign.

On one point, however, the demoralized majority party stood firm: it refused to lift the immunity of Deputy Bela Kovacs, Smallholder secretary-general, whose arrest the Communists were also demanding. So the Russians arrested Kovacs themselves, for suddenly discovered "crimes against the Soviet armies."

Kovacs' arrest was the first time that action had been dared against a top-ranking official of the party which had won the elections. It showed that the Soviets were now prepared to finish off the feeble shreds of Hungarian democracy altogether, at their convenience. The right moment came three months later, in May, 1947, while Premier Nagy was vacationing in Switzerland. It was suddenly announced that Kovacs, in a "confession" extracted by the Russians, had linked Nagy himself to another version of the now well-worn conspiracy against the government.

Communist leader Rakosi in Budapest called Nagy on the telephone in Locarno and archly assured him that if the Premier would return to Hungary to stand trial the Communists would gladly meet him at the frontier to give him safe convoy. Thereupon, in exchange for safe delivery to him of his small son, the Premier agreed to resign in Switzerland—rather than risk facing a Russian-controlled court on charges that he had, in effect, conspired against himself.

A new Premier—a docile pro-Soviet Smallholder named Lajos Dinnyes who as Defense Minister had already turned the Hungarian Army over to the Communists—straightway announced new elections for the Fall of 1947, two years before their time. A new and ingenious election law guaranteed a more agreeable vote count for the Left than the free elections of 1945. Under it the Communists could in effect choose the candidates who were to run against them. Hundreds of thousands of voters were disqualified, among them women who were "overzealously religious," slum-dwellers who were grotesquely described as ex-aristocrats, Jews who were accused of being ex-Nazis, elderly bourgeois ladies who were disenfranchised as "prostitutes," and many others who were simply crossed off for "belonging to the Opposition." The Communists even disqualified 186,000 Social-Democrats—thereby doublecrossing their own stooges. As a special convenience, "non-resident" voters were empowered to cast ballots outside their home districts. Accordingly, many Communists spent the whole of Election Day journeying from one voting precinct to another, leaving a vote at every stop. By a combination of such quaint devices, the

Communist Party managed to emerge from the count as the "strongest" in Hungary. From now on their domination of the government "coalition" would have the full odor of "democratic legality."

Meanwhile plans went forward for Marxist renovation of the country's economy, including nationalization of the banks and the major industries. A Three-Year Plan, complete with a "soak-the-rich" capital levy, was devised with the clear purpose of undermining the structure of private enterprise and private property.

Henceforth the only hope for revival of Hungarian liberty lay outside the frontiers. When and if the western democracies took effective political and economic action on a world scale, the Soviet drive for total Communist penetration might be halted and turned back. Otherwise, the blue Danube bisecting Budapest was sure to go a very deep Muscovite red.

It could be argued that *somebody* had to get rid of the reactionaries in the Smallholder Party, in the Army, the bureaucracy and so forth, so why complain if the Communists and the Socialists did it? Why expect democratic roses overnight from a fascist cabbage patch? Be realistic—and be satisfied with whatever improvements we can get. This is what I was told by various disembodied intellectuals when I was in Hungary (as in Yugoslavia and other cabbage patches), and what I have been told, since my return home, by numerous old associates who, not having to live in Hungary and not having seen what transpires there, can permit themselves the comforts of such "realism."

The flaw in this philosophy is that it neglects a few basic considerations. Not all of Hungary consisted of archaic aristocrats, flag-waving politicians and obscene pogromists. Not all of these voted for the Smallholders—and none of them held any influential position in that party, which was much more than could be said for its critics. I can testify that the leadership and lower levels of the Smallholder hierarchy were rather decent people. If given half a chance, they might have made something of Hungary.

Whatever the Communists and their friends may or may not have accomplished in Hungary, they certainly abolished the manorial system and bettered Hungary's formal relations with her great and powerful neighbor, the Soviet Union. These would seem to be large and substantial improvements over the past. The Communists themselves considered the revolutions in land distribution and foreign policy to be their greatest achievements. It should therefore be instructive to inspect these revolutions at shorter range.

Feudalism's finish was the one thing the Russians wanted in a hurry when they entered Hungary. They left most of the other purely internal political matters to the competent attentions of the local Communists, but they took a direct hand in the laudable business of cutting up the large estates. They shrewdly saw that division of the land would be the single most effective blow they could aim at the power of the squirearchy, keystone of the old anti-Soviet Hungary.

The law on agrarian reform was similar to those in Rumania and Poland, countries also occupied by the Red Army—a similarity which points up the Soviet origin of the program. The Hungarian law, in fact, was drafted by Russian Intelligence officers and presented to the Provisional Government by the Russian authorities. At a joint two-day meeting of the Government and the Russians at the Bika Hotel in Debrecen during early March, 1945, every Hungarian suggestion for amendment of the draft was rejected. The text was then rushed to the printers, and copies were dropped the next day from Soviet planes over the parts of Hungary still held by the Germans.

Promulgating the law on March 15th, its sponsors and the Communists insisted that its basic provisions be executed by October 15th. Seven months to erase the marks of a thousand years. A Communist headed the Agriculture Ministry, entrusted with general supervision of the plan. Communist agents of the Ministry went out into the provinces to help and advise the land committees set up in some 3,200 localities to supervise the parceling out of the land. More than one-third of all the arable soil in Hungary changed hands. Liberals abroad, especially those who knew the wickedness of the old Hungary's manorial structure, hailed this breathtaking accomplishment of the young postwar Hungary.

I thought the way to find out how dead Hungarian feudalism really was and how much good this had done the peasants would be to go out and look for myself.

My itinerary took me into southwestern Hungary, through the Lake Balaton country. Estates larger than 1,000 *holds* (1.4 acres per *hold*) had been totally expropriated by the new law; non-fascist owners of estates under 1,000 *holds* had been allowed to retain 100 *holds*. The high spots of my journey included an example of each type.

My Hungarian being limited to yes, no, I kiss your hand, hello and goodbye, I had two companions as buffer between me and the language.

One was Count Geza Palfy. The name Palfy is redolent with Hungarian history—and smells a bit of reaction too. Geza's brother, Fidel, was Agriculture Minister in the Nazi Arrow Cross government. Count Fidel had been tried as a war criminal and sentenced to death. But my Palfy hadn't talked to his brother for twenty years, until he brought some food and cigarettes and sat with the condemned man in his cell as a last gesture of simple fraternity. My Palfy had been Opposition leader in the Upper House of Parliament during the fascist period. He dressed anti-Nazi fugitives up as farmhands and hid them on his estate. He operated a secret radio transmitter broadcasting news about Hungary in English toward London. He was a receiving address for Allied propaganda leaflets smuggled into the country. One of the rare liberal landholders of the old regime, he was among the fifty-two proprietors in all Hungary who had been permitted to keep 300 *holds* (out of his original 2200) for distinguished service against the Nazis.

My other "interpreter" was Nandor Keszthelyi, director of the Press Department in the Foreign Office. A member of the Peasant Party, he was the counterweight to my aristocratic friend Palfy. But Keszthelyi also stood close to center rather than the extreme. He was a university graduate and Doctor of Laws. His background was European. It took the German Occupation to drive him back to the land. He helped draw up a manifesto demanding the recall of all troops from Russia and Hungary's withdrawal from the war. The Gestapo went after him and Keszthelyi disappeared into the villages of Balaton until the Russian liberation.

The jeep bumped out of Pest over the Franz Joseph bridge. The hills of Buda, a few kilometers of rolling country and then our road flattened into rich Trans-Danubia. We passed a long stretch of untended land, heavy with the tangle of weeds and wild grass.

Eugene Dreher's estate began 100 meters off the highway at Martonvasar. Dreher's only title was beer baron, but his lands were noble in sweep—7,000 *holds*, 600 of them just for the garden—dominated by a once magnificent Renaissance chateau. The house was stripped and dead now. Even the doors were gone, and the frames of the windows.

Dreher had been a noted horseracer, breeder and dairy farmer. We found one workhorse in the stables. The only man around the place was a rugged old character milking a cow. He told us the chateau had been the Russian *Kommandatura* for a while. They took everything away when they left. The cow and the horse had been overlooked, so now they were his, he informed us stolidly.

We went up and down several overgrown paths before reaching the first house showing signs of habitation. It was next to the bombed-out shell of Dreher's brewery. The house had two rooms sandwiching a kitchen. They were filled with beds, sofas and a couple of cradles. Very neat, but a little tight for eleven people.

The grandfather was the head of the family, a thresher by specialty. His machine was standing out back in the yard. "Yes," he said, "the land was all divided up." He had seven *holds* from before the war. The reform gave him four more, and he rented another twenty from his neighbors. "The peasants here," he explained, "don't have tools to work their new land. They're glad to get the cash instead." Usually one-third of the Dreher estate had autumn plowing; but this year only one-sixth was being plowed. On his thirty-one *holds*, the grandfather estimated, the eleven in the house could manage.

We drove a long time before we saw somebody of whom we could ask the way to the Csalla farm. A peasant answered our call and came limping across his field to us. I asked him why so much good land was lying idle on both sides of the road behind us. "Tractors need fixing," he said, "and we ought to get some horses or oxen. Last month I bought a horse from a Russian soldier for 300,000 pengős. A week ago another Russian took it away. He took some pigs too. I complained, and he shot me in the leg."

The Csalla farm, eight kilometers from Szekesfehervar, used to be 2,000 *holds*, owned equally by George Kegl and his two sisters. The Kegls had been allowed to keep 100 *holds*.

"I don't mind seeing the property go to the fifty-five families that used to work the estate," Kegl said. "But the land committee also parceled out some *holds* to a lot of workers in a factory at Szekesfehervar that makes pots and pans. Good politics, but bad economics. The land's been cut up into too many little pieces."

Life was rugged on the Csalla farm. The manor house lay barren, like the Dreher place. Kegl's sisters had fled to Budapest. He was staying in one room of his ex-stableman's house. Mrs. Balogh, the stableman's wife, dragged in three mattresses for us and started a hearty fire in the ceiling-high stove next to Kegl's bed. Food wasn't as easy. This area—County Feher—was thoroughly trampled by the wrestling Soviet and German armies which swayed back and forth from early December to mid-March of 1945 around the strategic Sio Canal. The Baloghs looked unhappy about killing one of their surviving chickens for the three gentlemen. Money wouldn't help, because it couldn't buy anything the peasants needed. But Palfy, wise

in the ways of the countryside, saved the day. He produced from our trailer a 15-kilogram sack of salt. For the peasants, salt was an unattainable necessity. We made a good bargain on both sides. One and a half kilos of salt got us a succulent *csirke paprikas*, with a thick potato soup to clear the way. The stove crackled reassuringly through the night, a counterpoint to the roaring wind outside. We slept deeply, despite a thin blanket, the bolted window, and a faint odor of smoke.

Away at 7 o'clock, with the late dawn, because night descended at 4:30 P.M. in that season, and motoring was risky after dark. At Szekesfehervar, seat of the *Kommandatura* for County Feher, I couldn't resist furtively snapshooting with my Leica. The town square was plastered with billboard paintings of Soviet victories on land, at sea and in the air. An electrified silhouette of Stalin swayed from a cable slung across the street. Nearby, a miniature airplane marked with black *Luftwaffe* crosses was nose-diving into the roof of a wrecked synagogue. At night, the Russian sentry said admiringly, electric sparks come out of the tail.

The assistant notary at Lepseny village calculated that a total of 2,956 *holds* had been distributed there. Land confiscated from the "Swabians" (German settlers who had been pro-Nazi during the Occupation) amounted to 1,400 *holds*. Count Nadasdy lost his 1,300-*hold* estate. Smalltime Hungarian collaborators contributed another 256 *holds*. "Only four families," the notary said, "were dissatisfied with the partition, because their land was situated five kilometers from their homes."

Prewar Lepseny had 500 brace of draft animals; 65 pair were left. The community had two wheezing tractors. Supply of seed was dangerously low. Autumn sowing had slumped from a normal 35 per cent to less than 20 per cent.

A Russian soldier came in and pounded on the table for a wagon to get his battalion's allotment of requisitioned wine. This reminded a member of the land committee present at the interview to tell me that the Russians exacted quarterly, for each ploughed *hold*, nine kilos of wheat, four of rye, two of beans, and nineteen of corn, "plus what they take by stealing." Even owners of unseeded *holds* must hand over three kilos of wheat per *hold*. "Most of the families won't have food reserves after January 15th. Some can manage through February. Only twenty families have enough till the June harvest."

The villagers actually looked back with nostalgia to the "good old days" before the war. They were landless then, many of them, but neither had they labored under many of the current afflictions. The

Nadasdy family now benefited from this mellow association. The Count was still a prisoner of war in Russia, but "we are rebuilding the manor for the Countess. She has petitioned for a little piece of land. Everybody hopes she'll get it."

At Siofok we crossed the Sio Canal by an improvised bridge and entered County Somogy. The Canal seemed to have shut off the war like a curtain. The bitterest fighting of the Hungarian campaign had occurred to the north. But on the south, the Red Army had swept up without opposition; the villages were virtually untouched and the landscape was without blemish.

The peasants in this area were dubious about the land reform at the start. The bailiffs of the Benedictine monastery which owned 52 per cent of the land around Endred helped nurse the suspicion. The land committee got nowhere for about six weeks because word went around that the reform would not endure. The peasants remembered the 1919 land reform, when returning soldiers divided 15 per cent of the feudal estates and the counterrevolution grabbed the land away again.

Government delegates had to come down from Budapest and coax the peasants into applying for the land. Young Bebesi, the local police chief, gave the committee two weeks more to distribute the land or go to jail. That brought action, but badly planned. Because applicants were relatively few, landless ex-farmhands received as much as 15 *holds*, and land was parceled out to former carpenters, shoemakers and the like. When all the available land was gone, peasants who had finally mustered enough courage began applying in droves. This compelled a redrafting of the lots. The farmhands were advised in the middle of their ploughing that they would have to give up some of their fifteen *holds*, and the craftsmen had to surrender all they received. The new rule was that a peasant and his wife would get five *holds*, and then one *hold* more for each child. But the land couldn't be stretched that far.

A tour of the Endred peasant cottages produced a rich variety of complaints, always washed down with the inevitable goblet of wine. "What was the good of breaking your back at a plough if it all went to the Russians?" ... "Why did the M—— family, with six children, get eleven *holds* and let them lie idle because the father is still away in a war prisoners' camp?" ... "I worked all my life to pay for my seven *holds*, and now my neighbor gets seven for nothing" ... "The government gave me four *holds* to go with the five I already had. They tell me I won't have to pay for ten years. I don't trust anything

I get practically free of charge" . . . "They've cut the size of my share and put a surveyor in to mark out the new boundaries. He's taking a long time to do it. I have to pay his fees." . . . "In the old days we worked for the Church and got fuel and clothing and food; now we have to worry about everything ourselves." . . .

But when I put the question, "Well, should the lands be returned to the monastery?" they all fidgeted, mumbled a while, and said no, let's wait a year and see. I discovered, in fact, that the Endred area had 30 per cent higher autumn sowing than the previous year. The village's remoteness from the main highway had kept the war and most of the Russians away, sparing the tractors, horses and oxen, and leaving more seed for the new ploughing.

I expected the village curé, Father Pongracz, with whom we dined that evening, to call perdition down on the land program. But instead he wielded the flagon of *siller* meditatively and pronounced the principle of the reform good. If he had had the arranging of it, he said, he would have made the peasant first "rent" his land from the State for a period of years. Later the land would go to the peasant outright if meanwhile he had proved he wanted it by his willingness and ability to work it. "Hungary simply doesn't have enough land to go around," said the priest. "I think a family of four needs at least ten *holds*, but the average distribution has been only about half that figure."

The morning of the third day we inspected the kind of village which Budapest critics of land reform had been using as Exhibit A.

It was Balvanyos, in a fertile valley of the rolling Balaton country. The widow of Paul Satzger, rich gentleman farmer, still lived here, in the servant rooms on the upper story of her twenty-one-room hunting lodge.

The estate once had 600 horses. One horse remained. I saw him munching hay in his new "stable"—the old laundryroom next to the kitchen on the top floor of the lodge.

Control of the land committee had been seized by a former Satzger coachman, two barrelmakers and the cobbler. The first three were Communists; the shoemaker was a Russian POW from the first World War, who had settled in the land of his captivity. He was the chairman, but quit after a few days in protest against the way his colleagues were disregarding the law. It provided, for instance, that war-widows were to have preference. The committee, instead, gave the choicest lands to members of the Communist party. The widows got little or nothing unless they belonged to the Party.

An ex-farmhand on the Satzger estate whose four sons were killed in the war received two *holds* of prairie. He had lived in the village all his life. But a Communist agent down from Budapest for a few weeks received 15 *holds* of vineyard and orchard. The law stipulated that well-to-do peasants—as distinct from gentry or nobility—might retain 200 *holds* instead of 100. But the lands of the three peasants in the district who were in this category had been stripped down to the lower maximum. Worse, two peasants who owned about 80 *holds* each were dispossessed entirely, the committee having arbitrarily pronounced them “enemies of the people.”

The November election figures in Balvanyos showed 530 votes for the Smallholders and only 42 for the Communists. We asked a village official why, in view of these results, the Communist committeemen weren't thrown out. “Nobody dares to complain,” was the reply, “They're afraid the Communists will denounce them to the Russians as fascists.” I inquired what the Russians would do in such a case. But there hadn't been any case. The threat had been sufficient.

Put all these little anecdotes and testimonials together, mix them with the pertinent statistics, and you come out with the story of how Hungary's wonderful opportunity for a sound agricultural economy was most wonderfully botched up by political opportunism and greed.

The Communists had just one valid excuse for the frailties of their new land system: that its benefits had been crippled by the effects of the war. Hungary was saddled with a large Occupation army which was eating up whatever immediate advantages the reform might have brought to the peasantry. Sixty per cent of the livestock and 80 per cent of the horses had been lost. At a moment when the creation of small, precarious holdings from large self-contained units required a multiplication of tools, Hungary's tractors and farm machinery lay rusting or destroyed.

No reasonable Hungarian disputed the urgent need for a new deal in the land. What one blamed the Communists for was the way they accomplished the redistribution and for what purpose. They rushed forth blindly to smash the landowners, their biggest enemy, and win the support of the peasants—instead of soberly planning the revision of the large-estate system in a manner which might have done the general economy and the peasants some good. The irony was that when the free elections came, the Communists and their bogus National Peasant Party saw the votes of the peasants go elsewhere.

Even the Communists' own statistics told why. A chart drawn up for me by their Agriculture Ministry showed 504,000 separate grants

of land totalling 2,300,000 *holds*.* A small percentage of the awards went for communal grazing and forest lands and a few model farms. But the great bulk was split into small individual grants. These, averaging a skimpy 4.5 *holds* per family, had chopped the rich Hungarian domain into a welter of uneconomic "dwarf" farms.

Palfy, the enlightened aristocrat, summed up the new tragedy of the ever-tragic Hungarian peasantry: "After the last war, a reactionary Hungarian regime divided more than a million *holds*, but gave half of them to officials, priests and even landowners, instead of to the peasants. This time, a revolutionary regime has torn the land away from everybody and given it to everybody else, without bothering to inquire much about qualifications or to furnish the peasant with tools and the support he must have. A nation of sturdy peasant farmers is fine as an ideal but it can't be created just by cutting the peasant off from his history. Though feudalism is dead, the peasant isn't convinced its passing has done him a good turn. If the Government can get rid of the wild-haired orators in the villages, and produce something to pull a plough with, then maybe the peasant will begin to see that at last he is free."†

KREMLIN COLONY

The other proudest feather in the Hungarian Communist cap was the friendship and collaboration of the new Hungary with "our great and glorious neighbor, the Soviet Union"—a neighbor whom the reactionaries of the old Hungary had used as a bogeyman to frighten small children and large crowds.

To be sure, defeated Hungary could not have debonairly declined this friendship, since she lay quite prostrate beneath her neighbor's armies of occupation. Only the most fanatic pro-Nazi diehards—and certainly no serious person in Hungarian politics—could have even contemplated the possibility of any policy but high cordiality toward Russia.

Strong pro-Soviet orientation was a policy for which a respectable case might have been made from the point of view of Hungarian interests. However, close inspection of the Communists' pro-Soviet pro-

* By 1947, the amount of land distributed had reached 5,600,000 *holds*, but without changing the basic pattern of the reform.

† An account of my expedition into the Hungarian countryside, substantially as I have told it above, was published several months later in an English magazine. A copy eventually reached Budapest. Count Palfy, who was taking no part in current politics and had been one of the few active workers in the anti-Nazi resistance, was arrested by the Russians. At this moment, his whereabouts are still unknown.

gram in action shows that it had no concern whatever for Hungarian interests, even the interests of those "broad people's masses" which the Communists liked to conjure up as their guiding star. Without the Red Army, Hungary's Communists would never have lasted a day in power. Thus it was obviously desirable to increase Russia's hold over Hungary, if only to prolong and improve the Communist position. On a higher level, the grafting of Hungary to the Soviet tree was a categoric imperative of Communist internationalism. On this lofty plane of action, Rakosi and his colleagues might as well have been Tibetans, for all the attention they gave to specific Hungarian interests. Just as it was obvious in Partisan Yugoslavia, so was it lucid clear in coalition Hungary, that Communists congenitally serve the Kremlin first, wherever they may be and under what flag.

My first glimpse of the Hungarian Communist genius for selling their own country down the Volga River was on the occasion of the notorious Russo-Hungarian "pact of economic collaboration."

This pact emerged originally from the inspired negotiations of Industries Minister Antal Ban and Commerce Minister Ernő Gerő in Moscow. Ban was nominally a Social-Democrat, but distinguishable from a Communist only by his party label. Gerő, veteran of the Bela Kun revolution and the Spanish Civil War, had spent the war years in Russia and returned to Hungary with the Red Army. The pair were sent to Moscow in August, 1945, to arrange a one-year trade agreement, nothing more. But they came home with a five-year treaty calculated to turn Hungary into a Soviet colony.

During their parleys in the Soviet capital, word of what they were preparing to give away filtered back to Budapest. Premier Miklos, as he confirmed to me after his retirement from office, telephoned them in Moscow, reminded them that their authority was strictly limited to a simple one-year barter pact, and ordered them to commit the Government on nothing else. Disregarding the chief of their own cabinet, the two envoys initialed their treaty with a flourish.

The treaty proposed a joint company to oversee Hungary's oil, bauxite, coal, minerals, chemicals, power plants, machinery production, shipping, air transport, motor transport, automobile manufacture, and agriculture. Russia would contribute "half the capital"—mainly by leaving industrial properties in Hungary which the USSR could otherwise claim as reparations. A Soviet-Hungarian bank would supervise all these manifold exploitations. Boiled down, the deal meant that by the end of five years Russia would have established an unshakable grip on Hungary's entire economy.

When this astonishing Soviet proposition was made known in great secrecy to the Hungarian cabinet, it precipitated a near rebellion among the Ministers. The impression of the non-leftist members, and even the Soviet-appointed General Miklos, was that the pact seemed closer to high treason than to a fair contract.

The Russians, however, proceeded to turn the pressure screws, meanwhile straining to keep the whole affair ultra-confidential. Only a handful of people outside the cabinet room knew of the impending sell-out. Nobody in the Allied Military Missions knew anything about the treaty, either. Their first information came from a carbon which I gave to General Key when I brought my story to the U.S. Military Mission's radio room for transmission via army channels through Frankfurt to London and New York. And the only reason I knew was because a member of the Hungarian cabinet summoned me to his room at night and gave me his copy of the draft treaty, at great personal risk, in the hope that publicity abroad might provoke Anglo-American protest strong enough to avert the disaster of ratification.

I wrote a dispatch without adjectives, in sober, news-agency style, sticking close to the text of the treaty. The story was published in London on a Saturday. It broke during a week-end recess of the Council of Foreign Ministers. The Sunday papers in London carried front-page rewrites, questions and protests. On Monday the Soviet-Hungarian pact was placed on the table at a stormy session of the Foreign Ministers. Sharp representations were forwarded to Moscow. "The British and American Governments," said the London *Times*, "have expressed their strong regrets at the terms of the Soviet-Hungarian agreement. They did so reluctantly . . . but after careful study of the terms they felt they had no other choice. . . ."

In Budapest, Voroshilov waited until the clamor had died a bit, then tried one last trump. A stern intimation went to the cabinet, through the indefatigable Father Balogh, that not only Voroshilov, as chairman of the Allied Control Commission, but the ACC itself recommended ratification. The cabinet stampeded. If Britain and the U. S. endorse a pact which delivers Hungary complete to the Soviet, the Ministers reasoned, then they have indeed given Hungary up for lost and there is no point in our further resistance. Stipulating that their decision was based on Voroshilov's assurances of ACC unanimity, the cabinet voted for ratification.

Fresh outcry in the London press. In Budapest, Generals Edgcumbe and Key intimated to the Marshal that the ACC could not possibly have recommended the pact, since the ACC had never been allowed to discuss the matter. The two generals demanded an early meeting

with their Soviet chairman to examine this painful subject. They were advised that the Marshal was ill. While they waited, he consulted his "physicians" in Moscow by telephone.

Meanwhile, also, implementation of the pact was stalled by a happy technicality. Final approval had to be obtained from the Supreme State Council, whose President, Parliamentary Speaker Zsedenyi, showing remarkable courage, was prepared to refrain from ratification if the democracies gave him half a leg to stand on. Temporary rescue arrived in the form of an American note. Served simultaneously on both London and Moscow in order to preserve appearances, the note suggested that a proper way to assist Hungary in her economic difficulties might be through the collaboration of the *three* Allies, a procedure of which there had been some mention at Yalta. Washington declared itself ready to discuss such collaboration at Soviet pleasure.

This lifted the pact ratification crisis out of the cloak-and-dagger category into the embarrassing international daylight. Voroshilov's pressure slackened off. The wily Zsedenyi carefully suggested that the pact might be too large a step for a provisional government to take, after all. Would it not be better to await the elections, and then leave the task to a new government securely anchored by the people's mandate? The Marshal nodded gravely. He assured his Anglo-American colleagues the matter was now on higher levels than ACC, and he would make no further moves until a decision came down from above.

But in the final payoff, there was little satisfaction for the democracies except the meager one that the affair of the pact had again demonstrated the utility of full and unhampered reporting of news from Russia's Europe. Apart from that, the Russians carried off all the prizes, with the help of their local Communist agents. After the elections, a victorious Smallholder Party which meekly consented to share its authority with a discredited minority could hardly have been expected to hold out against half the Government and all the Russians in Hungary on the pact question.

As for the democracies, they made the same retreat on the post-elections economic front as they had made on the political. An American note reminded Hungary that she was bound by a 1926 treaty to give most-favored-nation treatment to the U. S. But the Russians sidestepped this with remarkable ease. They simply rewrote their treaty draft to make the text say that Hungary would be free to conclude similar agreements with other powers. This sounded fine, fine enough to stop further Western objections, but it meant nothing—because when the Russians and the Hungarian Left finished putting

the ratified treaty into effect, very little was to remain for the democracies to make agreements about.

Not that we were ready, in that crucially formative period, to strengthen the Hungarians against Soviet economic domination by giving them any economic support ourselves.

Hungary needed raw materials, food, machinery, loans. The Russians were driving a monstrous bargain; they were taking away more than they offered; but they were offering *something*. The one-year exchange agreement with Moscow was already obtaining Russian cotton and other supplies. When turned into finished goods, most of this would go right back to Russia, but at least it set a few wheels of Hungarian industry turning again. And the five-year treaty, although it yielded the Soviets enormous profits from a grotesquely small investment, would bring in Soviet technicians and keep Hungarian machinery in Hungary instead of packing it off to Russia as "reparations."

Of all the Allied economic mistakes in Hungary, the biggest was the one committed at the outset. The Armistice required Hungary to pay two hundred million dollars in reparations to the Soviets—a reasonable sum considering Hungarian war damage to Russia. But the Armistice, as vague in its economic as in its political clauses, did not specify how these reparations were to be paid, in what materials and in what assessed value. This enabled the Russians to take anything they pleased, and check it off at low-level prewar prices—an evaluation which automatically increased Hungary's reparations debt by more than 100 per cent.

At Potsdam, we gave Hungary another shove toward the status of Soviet dependency by agreeing that the Russians might help themselves to all ex-German assets—without defining what these were. Later Soviet interpretation of the phrase "external German asset" was so fantastic that it pretty nearly included anything in which a Reichsmark had ever been invested, as well as all properties seized or extorted from Jews, foreigners and anti-Nazis during the German Occupation.

The Soviets thus could offer the Hungarians this choice: We will dismantle the "ex-German" factories for transportation to the Soviet Union, or you will contribute other Hungarian factories to a Russo-Hungarian combine which we will manage inside Hungary on a "50-50" basis.

It was still not too late for the democracies to block this by a firm stand on the diplomatic level and by a tangible contribution to Hungarian reconstruction. Instead, the bewildered, impotent Hungarian

Government got only pious injunctions from us, and the Russians received our polite invitations to please talk the whole thing over.

Anglo-American failure to seize the economic initiative stemmed from the same malady as our political paralysis. We certainly had the wherewithal for the relief of Hungary's economic doldrums. But we were obsessed by "higher considerations": the dread of doing anything on our own which might offend the suspicious Russians; the pipe-dream of getting the Russians to be agreeable to us in the end if we were agreeable to them all the way from the beginning. When we started to realize our mistake, we performed according to type by doing too little too late.

Leftist propaganda made capital out of our neglect. Justifying his alliance with the Communists, Socialist leader Szakasits told the country: "Hungary can count on Russian help, but she will knock in vain on British and American doors."

Communist indifference to a democratic Hungary's interests lay poorly concealed in every other move the Party made for the further advancement of Soviet economic power.

The garden of economic collaboration sown by the Moscow pact bloomed early with four flowers: joint tax-exempt "Sovmagyar" companies for the exploitation of Hungary's oil, bauxite, Danube shipping and civil aviation.

In the aviation company, the Soviets "invested" the eleven best airfields of Hungary and their installations, which the Red Army had "liberated" from the Germans. To the shipping combine the Russians presented the Hungarian riverboats and docks of the Austrian-owned Danube Navigation Company. Both combines enjoyed a virtual monopoly. In oil and bauxite [Hungary had the largest bauxite reserves in Europe] the joint companies were granted exclusive priorities for prospecting and exploitation of the richest fields. Soviet 50-per-cent interest in the bauxite company rested on a 34-per-cent block of ex-German stock; the difference in the percentages was hastily liquidated after the Russians reminded the Hungarian negotiators that various bauxite plants could be "legally" torn down and transported to the USSR. A myth of joint control was created by dressing up the boards of directors in each combine with a Hungarian chairman—but the Soviet general manager was empowered to make agreements without consulting the board. The first agreement concluded by the bauxite company's manager was that exports had to be approved by both governments. This gave the Soviet an absolute veto on shipments of bauxite—vital in airplane construction—to non-satellite countries. In

addition the Soviets took 18 per cent of the shares in the Credit Bank, dominant bank in Hungarian finance and industry, and demanded three of its six managing directorships. The Nazis had seized these shares from their French and Austrian-Jewish owners, but the Russians pocketed them as "ex-German" property.

In the matter of determining the title to such properties, the Russians, of course, did not need any Hungarian sanction to take whatever they wanted. But after the first fine rapturous grabs of the Liberation period, when things had begun to settle down under the legally elected but completely lopsided government of Tildy and Nagy, it amused the Russians for form's sake to admit Hungarian counter-claims. They ran no risk, because the decisions on the Hungarian side were handed down by an organism called the Supreme Economic Council—which, though ostensibly controlled by the Smallholder Premier, was actually the instrument of its Secretary-General. This was the genially ruthless Communist Zoltan Vas, who had been forced out of his self-appointed job as Budapest's Lord Mayor by the ungrateful vote of the burghers in the October municipal elections.

A soldier in Bela Kun's Army at the age of seventeen, Vas had spent sixteen of the twenty-five years between 1920 and 1945 in Hungarian jails. He spent the other nine years in Russia. When he returned to Hungary, he kept his Soviet citizenship. I sat in his Budapest office once for ninety minutes, and during the interview the telephones on his desk rang twelve times, and eleven out of the dozen times the conversation was in Russian.

Vas was submerged in the Supreme Economic Council's byzantine planning of Hungary's monetary stabilization. Those were the days when the pengő had already gone beyond being simply crazy and had disappeared into the Olympian blue of astronomical measurements, leaving a scorching trail of zeros behind.

For this predicament, the Hungarian people could partly thank their helpful neighbor, the Soviet Union, whose armies had eaten up or carried off so much of what remained in Hungary after the Germans departed that no monetary system could possibly have survived the resulting scarcity of goods. In addition, the pengő had been not a little panicked into flight by the vast and uncontrolled quantities of paper money poured out from the Occupation forces' printing presses.

At any rate Vas and his Supreme Economic Council were engaged in inventing the "forint," a new money to replace the pengő. "Don't try to understand this or explain it to your readers," he advised me with

a round-faced smile. "To them, this business of pengöcs and forints must sound like Hottentots exchanging shells."

But one thing I eventually understood, when the stabilization went into effect soon after, on August 1, 1946. The forint was pegged at 11.6 to the dollar—a rate which turned Americans in Budapest from pengö billionaires into forint paupers overnight. That didn't matter; what did matter was that the new rate made it very difficult for the U.S. and Britain to buy anything from Hungary or lend her money. But, like Yugoslavia, Hungary's only solid chance for economic recovery lay in the West, in the credits, machinery and raw materials which she could never hope to get from the Soviet Union. At the exchange rate dictated by her Russo-Communist brain-trusters, business or even philanthropy from the United States was neatly hamstrung.

When the Paris Peace Conference came along, the leftist bloc in Budapest howled like banshees against the "Western imperialists" who seemed bent on ruining brave little democratic Hungary. At the bottom of this clamor was a treaty clause requiring payment of two-thirds of the value of war damages suffered by private property of United Nations citizens in Hungary. There was, however, no room in the leftist press to report that efforts to reduce Hungary's reparations debt to Russia (\$200,000,000) and to Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia (\$100,000,000) had been blocked by the Slavic states.

To believe the leftists, Hungary's economic woes were exclusively caused by American failure to return no less than \$3,000,000,000 worth of Hungarian property stolen by the Nazis and captured from them by the U.S. Army in Austria and Germany. Instead of giving this fabulous fortune back, the Americans were scheming to use it as a political pressure weapon against the Hungarian people.

The manifest absurdity of this figure of \$3,000,000,000 may be seen in the fact that Hungary's *total* prewar national wealth, apart from immovable real estate, had been only \$4,400,000,000.

The maximum value of the Nazi loot could not possibly have exceeded a half-billion dollars. Of this, a substantial part was war material which had been expended in the final fighting, livestock which had been eaten up by the Germans, and railroad equipment which the Red Army had retrieved. The Communists never mentioned this. Nor did they recall the \$32,000,000 in Hungarian gold restored by the Americans to serve as the gold backing for the new Hungarian currency, or the \$25,000,000 in gems, paintings and other valuables looted from Hungary by the Nazis and returned to Hungary by the U.S. Army.

On the other hand, the Communists passed over in beatific silence the numerous contributions made by the Soviet Union to the economic ruin of the Hungarian people.

The war had cut Hungary's national income in half, reduced her industrial equipment by 40 per cent, her supply of goods and raw materials by 50 per cent, her over-all productive capacity by 70 per cent. Of all the victors and vanquished in World War II, Hungary was by far the most crippled. Under such circumstances, it might have been expected that Russia would show some generosity—to prove the sincerity of her desire to raise up friendly states on her border. Instead she:

Required Hungary to sustain a Red Army which at one time exceeded one million men and averaged a half-million during the first two years of the Occupation.

Took 4,000,000 tons of grain (more than half the prewar annual production) in less than one year of "Liberation" for the feeding of the Red Army.

Sped Hungary on the downgrade toward total collapse by other gigantic military requisitions, and looting.

Levied a 5-percent *monthly* fine for arrears in reparations deliveries. Forgave a small part of these arrears, extended the reparations from six to eight years when Hungary proved unable to meet her quotas, but somehow added \$20,000,000 to the bill.

Compelled Hungary to use the Danube as the reparations delivery route in order to force the hire of Soviet and "50-50" ships, the only ones available, at exorbitant freight rates;

Collected in reparations and Occupation costs a full one-half of Hungary's entire production, or a sum equivalent annually to one-third of Hungary's total national income.

Pressed an additional "Potsdam" claim for \$200,000,000—money owed by pre-Liberation Hungary to German firms—while refusing to acknowledge a larger sum owed by such firms to the Hungarians.

All this was evidently so trivial as not to be worth passing reference by Communist orators. Reparations were cited only when the Party could applaud Soviet "magnanimity" for occasionally halting and taking breath in the hard work of collecting the Hungarian debt. Ordinary citizens took a dimmer view of Russian mercy: "They ate us at the start like wild beasts; now they use knives and forks."

The Russians certainly had a legitimate grudge against Hungary. The Hungarians had put up the feeblest anti-Nazi resistance, fought Russia the longest of all Hitler's satellites and given the least help against Hitler after the surrender. Seen in that light, the Hungarians

got what was coming to them. But the Soviet manner of waging peace was hardly the manner endorsed by the United Nations—and by Russia herself in reiterated declarations. The strategy of “winner take all” could not solve the Hungarian problem for Russia. It emphatically could do a democratic or even a Soviet Hungary no good, however loud the rhetoric employed to persuade the Hungarian people and the world. Therein lay the Soviet error, and the Hungarian Communists’ betrayal of their own country. Russia’s peace stood closer in spirit to Carthage than to Yalta. It is nowhere recorded that the Carthaginians, or any portion of them, found cause to rejoice.

8

Rumania: Latin Neighbor

For the journey from Budapest to Bucharest, I had a car and chauffeur, both lent by a fellow lodger at the Bristol. My benefactor was a Rumanian who bore an Italian name and avowed that he had begun life as a Greek. The favor would be mutual, this worthy assured me. His firm needed the *Opel* in Bucharest, and my uniform would help bring the car safely over the bandit-infested roads. He guaranteed the perfect condition of vehicle and driver, the latter being positively the peer of all Rumanian chauffeurs.

After we got under way, it became apparent that the *Opel* had no brakes, no headlights, and could go at a maximum speed of 30 miles per hour because the tires were ersatz and you could actually smell them burning if you went faster. The chauffeur, Ludwig, confirmed the adage that there were three kinds of people in Rumania, the good, the bad, and the chauffeurs. He complained he couldn't eat food on an empty stomach, so he would consume a full bottle of brandy in lieu of breakfast each morning. This failed to befuddle him, but it did slow him down. The *Opel* needed to be repaired before each run, and we had to be off the roads before dark. In addition, some hours were consumed at customs houses on both edges of the frontier. The *Opel*, as I discovered half in sorrow, half in mirth, had been spirited into Hungary illegally, and that was why an innocent in American uniform was needed to take it back to Rumania again—not because of any bandit-infested roads. The only bandit in the story was my Rumano-Italo-Greek acquaintance, who also gave me a box of medicines (no doubt bottles filled with contraband) to bear to his ailing mother.

So the two-day passage from Budapest to Bucharest took six. The chief victim of this was my wife in New York. Concluding from my silence that I might be forever lost in the wild-boar forests of Transylvania, she appealed to the State Department for an investigation. In due course the Department advised her that I had indeed been seen exiting from the Hungarian capital but that no further queries could be sent for a time, since it was the Christmas season, and did my wife

desire the search to be resumed after New Year's Day? Otherwise my expedition was satisfactory and instructive, though I did grow a bit tired of the Rumanian peasantry's staple diet, *mamaliga*, which is corn flour boiled in water and salt.

We stopped the first night at Oradea Mare, just across the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier. All this territory, given by Hitler to Hungary, was restored by the Armistice and Messrs. Bevin, Byrnes and Molotov to Rumania. The defiant Hungarians still kept their name for it, Nagyvarad. For the "Saxons," as the few surviving *Volksdeutsche* are called, it remained Grosvardein.

I visited Count B——. Like many of the Budapest aristocrats, he was living in one corner of his no-longer-magnificent town house, the two rooms piled with beds, sofas, closets and bric-a-brac like a second-hand furniture shop. Russian officers occupied the rest of the place. The Count existed in a state of unmodulated jitters. "The Russians were terrible," he said, "but since they've calmed down they at least are protecting us from the Rumanians. God knows what will happen to us when the Russians leave. Bucharest really wants a live-and-let-live policy toward the Magyars here and all through Transylvania. But the local Rumanians are too fanatic against us to pay any attention to the government's good-will efforts."

We lunched at a little tavern near Cluj. Every peasant who entered bowed in my direction with great respect. After much reflection, one of them approached the driver and asked to speak to me. Ludwig brought him over. The peasant tugged his hat off. He inquired if I had any news of his son, Radu, who lived in "Newyorkland." When I said no, he specified that his son lived in a great city called "Lexington-avenue." Later Ludwig reported that all the peasants had been delighted to see an American. They wanted him to tell me they loved the Americans and British, and did not like the Russians. Since I seemed to be the first American they had ever seen, how could they love me? Ludwig elucidated pompously: "The Rumanian peasant hates so strongly what has harmed him that he loves anything which has not yet harmed him." I didn't know if I could reciprocate this affection. I remembered the photographs a Soviet Intelligence officer in Belgrade had shown me of what Rumanian peasants like these, in uniform, had done to the Russian villages between the Dniester and Stalingrad. And those snapshots of the Jassy massacres, when 5,000 Jews were loaded into freight cars, and Rumanian peasant-soldiers under German direc-

tion helped put them in, and twelve hours later, at Podul Ilcoalei, other Rumanian peasants helped pull out 1,200 suffocated corpses.

We spent a memorable night in Sibiu. I shall never forget the hotel, not for its sonorous name, *Imparatul Romanilor* (The Emperor of the Romans) but for its steam heat and hot water. After three petrified months in Budapest, a warm room felt better than Omar's jug, loaf, verses, and even Thou.

This place once had a large Saxon population. The Russians evidently missed a few. The Emperor of the Romans had displayed a big placard when the Germans were there: *Intrarea evreilor in local strict oprita—Juden-Eintritt streng verboten* (Jews Keep Out). The hotel manager was one of the town's leading Nazis. When the Russians arrived, he slipped away into the hills. Most of the Saxons between eighteen and forty years of age were sent to forced labor in Russia. Then the Red Army settled down to the routine of occupation. The manager came back. He was running the hotel again. I mentioned this to the Soviet colonel in charge of the gasoline dump. He shrugged. "It's a comfortable hotel, isn't it?"

The last night before Bucharest, we stopped at Sinaia, seat of Rumania's dynasty, and Rumania's Monte Carlo. Before the war, the Casino had been operated by a private concessionaire. The latter, George Litman, obtained his concession from a syndicate of Rumanian hospitals, to which he turned over monthly a substantial share of his take. Litman left Rumania ahead of the Germans, and joined the Free French Forces. I met him later in Turkey, where he was seconded to us by the French and did excellent work for the OWI as an Intelligence officer. After the war he settled down in Paris. The Sinaia croupiers were now performing for the Communist Party, with Litman out in the cold and the Communists controlling the Casino—and the hospitals.

The Sinaia area used to be a land of milk and honey, but there was a scarcity of butter and eggs when we sat down for dinner in the Park Hotel. "The Russians take it all," grumbled a man at the next table. "And they've ruined so many farms, pretty soon there won't be any meat either. Prices of feed for livestock have gone way up. I had to destroy my pigs, I couldn't afford to keep them." Just then, three drunk and incredibly dirty Russian soldiers lurched in and roared for dinner. The crowded restaurant fell silent. "Soviet culture," somebody muttered. . . .

GAY DECEIVERS

Buکور is the Turkish word for joy—Bucharest, "City of Joy." The Turks had been gone a long time, and now the Russians, who are less

easily amused, were there, but the capital of Rumania still made merry. By January, 1946, the Soviet garrison of Bucharest had dispensed its excess energy and settled down, except for sounds of firing which occasionally enlivened the night. Young King Michael's revolt against the Germans had saved the city from Russian siege and bombardment. The entering Red Army found few scars of war. The only mark still vividly noticeable was the backside of the Palace. Hedge-hopping Nazi bombers had smashed it spitefully just after the *coup d'état*, seeking out the royal youth who had breezily locked up his Prime Minister, defied the Fuehrer, and retired to a provincial monastery, where he sat it out until the bombs stopped falling on his palace.

One could walk the well-lit boulevards of Bucharest by night. Cinemas, dusting off the prewar American, British and French films released from limbo by the war's end, played to enraptured capacity audiences. Night clubs flourished. There were more Hungarian entertainers—tap-dancers, magicians, clowns and blondes—in Bucharest than in all of Hungary.

Prices in the days of my first arrival in Bucharest were still plausible. Shops bulged with goods. In the provinces, food was beginning to dwindle, but the capital seemed to lack nothing. The only rationed item was bread. Restaurant-keepers would buy in profusion on the black market, however, and put it before you wrapped up in newspaper, pretending you had brought it in yourself. A vast center table in the dining room of the Athenée Palace Hotel, wartime headquarters of every espionage network in Eastern Europe, sagged with delicacies long departed from other capitals: caviar, partridge, exotic fish, and layer cakes heaped a foot high with cream. Kapsha's restaurant, on the Calea Victoriei, was the mecca of all surviving gourmets. Angriest man in Bucharest, I think, was Kapsha's major-domo, Marius, who considered himself mortally offended by that mighty Soviet man of letters, Ilya Ehrenburg. "I served him with my own hands when he came to Bucharest, that Ehrenburg," Marius told me, eyes brimful with righteous tears. "He came to write a report on how well Bucharest was doing under Soviet occupation. For evidence, I gave him the best meal he had eaten in years. He said so himself. He even sent his compliments to the owner and staff. And then, when he had finished and gone away, he wrote a terrible story about us, about the revolting atmosphere, our 'sniveling bourgeois clientele.'"

The Frenchified Rumanians said of America that it was a land of "*toute possibilité*." To return the compliment, it could be said of Ru-

mania that it was a land of "*toute impossibilité*." Anything was not only possible in Bucharest, but likely.

The city was in the throes of a deadly political struggle. Rival parties were marching and demonstrating against each other. The streetcars, controlled by the Communist-dominated Government, carried lurid signs proclaiming "Death to Maniu!" "Death to Bratianu!" and death to other opponents of the regime. Until one day someone painted the side of a tram: "Death to Bedbugs! Buy Plotox!"

Police chasing a political suspect into the Athenée one afternoon cornered him in a friend's room where an American colonel, the mission's doctor, happened to be visiting. That made the room Allied territory for the moment, and unbreachable. The police took up siege positions in the corridor. The Colonel refused to leave. After a few hours, he took some chocolate bars and cigarettes to the police. The police munched and smoked but sat tight. At 1:30 o'clock in the morning, the Prime Minister telephoned and made a bargain to let the fugitive off if the Colonel would come over with some American penicillin and pump it into an ailing cabinet colleague.

I think the thing which keeps Bucharest's memory warmest in my heart is the nimble-witted roguery which prevailed among high and low there, a sort of gay *Schwindlerei* so ingrained and so universal that it soared above and beyond mere morality, like the weather.

There were, of course, different grades of *Schwindlerei*, and some were less exalted than others. Against the meanest form of knavery, common theft, a characteristic precaution was taken by all restaurant proprietors: they engraved every piece of silver with the word *furat*, which means "stolen." Somewhat higher in the scale were devices such as the marketing of American and British cigarettes for up to a dollar a pack, wrapped in regulation cellophane or tinfoil and properly sealed, but when one opened the pack one found cheap native cigarettes inside. Still a little higher was routine bribery on a grand plan like the time a small band of imaginative men desiring a carload of American drugs which had just landed at a Black Sea port (for trans-shipment across Rumania into Central Europe) succeeded in hauling away all the intervening freightcars, returning with another locomotive, hitching it to the drugcar, pulling the car back down to the dock and emptying its contents into a waiting ship—all this without being noticed by the numerous police guards on duty in the freightyards and on the wharf.

But such accomplishments mixed muscle with brain, and were therefore considered less admirable than purely mental feats. To virtuosi of

the latter category, the word *Schmecker* was applied. This word—of Germanic origin because the Rumanians, with unaccountable modesty, considered Germans the really great ones at artful dodges—meant “smooth operator.” It sounded contemptuous, but was covertly spoken in praise and envy.

One such *Schmecker*, a rich young man whom I had the honor of knowing, managed to save his automobile from Russian seizure by getting the British to requisition it instead, which entitled him to put a Union Jack on the windshield, drive the car around himself, and draw a salary as chauffeur.

Absolutely top-flight *Schmeckerei*, the area of really large-scale operations, was naturally reserved to personalities of governmental level. This was in keeping with revered tradition. Easily half of Rumania’s prewar cabinet ministers had been involved in grand peculations, so why should the current crop show less ingenuity? The fact that the new Government was a “People’s Government,” a cabinet of patriots and revolutionaries under Soviet patronage, was so irrelevant as to be positively naïve. The Social-Democrat Tudor Ionescu, a gentleman of humble and unmoneyed origins, had been earning a proper salary for only about a year; his combined income as Mines and Petroleum Minister and as university professor came to about three million lei for that period, but he was nevertheless able at the end of it to buy a factory worth six hundred million. Communist Interior Minister Teohari Georgescu, formerly a newspaper composing-room printer, now owned one hundred suits and a Lincoln-Zephyr car. And so on.

ECONOMICS, LAW AND ORDER

This cult of deft self-enrichment was the immediately obvious difference to be noted between Rumania and the previous countries in my political pilgrimage, where *Schwindlerei*, though piously practiced, rarely achieved the delicate subtleties of the Rumanian brand. Otherwise, there was much in Bucharest that was already familiar—familiar because of Yugoslav and Hungarian previews.

To begin with, I found the same apparent devotion to the cause of the common man. Division of the land was one of the new regime’s basic accomplishments. It had affected fewer acres than in Hungary, because prewar Rumania had made a better try at agrarian reform than the Magyar countocracy, and to that extent the Rumanian effort had created less “dwarf” farms and less muddled economics.

As elsewhere in Russia’s Europe, the long-underprivileged Rumanian industrial workers had become the favored folk of the new regime.

Overdelayed and intrinsically desirable benefits such as paid vacations, medical services, maternity and sick leave, and hygienic working conditions were being resolutely promoted. A basic collective labor contract attempted to keep workers abreast of the rising inflationary tide. The contract came to the employee's rescue by giving him a long string of bonuses over and above his ceiling wage: a seniority bonus for length of service with the firm, a good-attendance bonus for not coming late or missing work, a rent bonus for the size of his family, a travel bonus if he lived far from the factory, winter relief, Christmas relief, Easter relief, birth relief, marriage relief, death relief. Employers were also required to supply workers' *economat* (canteens) with food at official rather than black-market prices.

Laudable though these reforms were, the manner of their execution tipped the regime's hand to its real purpose, which was something other than improvement of the common man's lot. Land distribution was a Communist-managed operation to reward the faithful and enlist new voters. Judges and university professors received less pay than unskilled workers in some industries. Labor benefits were designed to keep the masses temporarily content while liquidating the employer class, at whatever damage to the general economy and the workers' long-range security.

Thus unemployment was in effect outlawed by simply forbidding the industrialist to discharge any of his personnel no matter how little he needed them. Plants ran at half their production capacity or less, but all the workers had to be retained. This put the full burden of unemployment relief—at full pay—entirely on the owner class. Meanwhile, workers paid their employer legal prices for food which the employer could obtain nowhere except on the black market at from five to twenty times the cost. Certain workers got so much cheap food they could sell a sizable surplus on the black market, for the employer to buy back again. Many concerns also had to supply clothing for their workers on the same basis. Similarly, manufacturers were required to sell their own products at official rates but got no government help to escape buying their raw materials at black-market rates. Many officials even oiled the wheels of this dilemma by selling government stocks of raw goods on the black market themselves.

Confronted by the impossibility of earning an honest living and the difficulties of earning a dishonest one, Rumanian commerce and industry were being quietly strangled. Electoral ballyhoo pledged the regime to defense of "private property, the source of all creative enterprise," but this did not prevent decrees which fought "economic sabotage" by dictating what each industry should produce, with what

machines and raw materials, at what prices and under what conditions. Government managers could be installed in any plant where "sabotage" was known or suspected. The decline of private enterprise was further hastened by the rise of the powerful "shop committees," that ubiquitous phenomenon of all Soviet-inspired economies. Even the government admitted that these committees, by wrecking discipline, using up working time at interminable rallies, and meddling with management instead of sticking to improvement of labor conditions, were largely responsible for drastic production drops. The committees, and the national trade unions to which they belonged, had a percentage of Communist leadership immensely out of proportion to the percentage of Communists among the workers—a discrepancy which should no longer surprise the reader.

Nor did Rumania display any novelties in the methods by which justice was being administered under the new dispensation.

It being a first principle of leftist strategy to lay hold of the courts and the police, the Justice and Interior ministries were both headed by Communists.

The basic Rumanian Constitution prescribed that magistrates be kept immune from political influences by making their tenure inviolable. This guarantee of freedom of the courts had been suspended by Marshal Ion Antonescu, Rumania's wartime Premier. The suspension was continued by the post-Liberation regime. Presumably, this was required in order to facilitate the purging of pro-Axis judges. But magistrates continued to be hireable and firable at the discretion of the Communist Minister of Justice long after dismissals for wartime indiscretions had ceased.

When, by some aberration of virtue, a court attempted to keep its verdicts in harmony with the law, and thereby happened to disagree with the Minister's interpretation of that law, the Minister was not slow to act. Such a case was one involving a shoe manufacturer accused of hoarding and "economic sabotage." This unfortunate was sentenced by a lower court to jail for seven years, a verdict highly applauded by the Government. But a Court of Appeals reversed the judgment. So Justice Minister Lucretiu Patrascanu denounced the Appeals Court magistrates on the radio and suspended them from the bench. In an interview I had with him on the subject, Patrascanu gravely explained that he had punished the judges for "failing to accept the evidence offered by the Prosecutor." But an inquiry by the Supreme Court found the Appeals Court's decision justified. This compelled the Minister to reinstate the magistrates, but with a "warning" to do better

next time. Meanwhile the police rearrested the shoemaker, "examined" him for more evidence, then put him up for trial again. While awaiting this, he died in jail. When I inquired why the man had been hauled up to answer an old charge on which he had been already acquitted, Minister Patrascanu smiled at my ignorance of legal procedure. "The Justice Ministry had nothing to do with the second arrest," said he. "That was entirely a decision of the Police, over which, of course, I have no control."

This was perfectly true. Not only did the Justice Ministry have no control over the Police, a division of labor which was tolerably normal, but it also frequently had no control over the fate of the arrested, which was not so normal, not even for the romantic Balkans.

The jurisdiction of the courts over accused persons lapsed notably in political cases. Communists operated the *Sigurantsa Generale a Statului* [General State Security], sometimes referred to by its terminal initials, SS. Its name was reminiscent of the German, its structure of the Hungarian, and its technique of both. Secret inquiries, undisclosed charges, arrests and disappearances were the order of the day. As always, the excuse was the defense of democracy, and, as always, the true purpose was the defense of the regime against all opposition.

Even mightier than the *Sigurantsa*, which spent a good part of its time persecuting small fry or breaking up Opposition meetings with the informal assistance of a club-swinging, civilian "militia" from the factories, was a "Special Service of Information"—with power to arrest—which devoted itself single-mindedly to the highest affairs of State. The chief of this omnipotent agency was one Emil Bodnaras, who sat in a modest office a few doors removed from the office of the Prime Minister. Ostensibly only the State Secretary in the Prime Ministry, Bodnaras, by dint of his police function and his central place in the Communist Party, was the real ruler of Rumania, next to the Russians.

Bodnaras' history was studded with jail sentences and periods of Muscovite exile, exactly like his colleagues now wielding power in countries of Soviet influence already reviewed. He was a Ukrainian from Bukovina, which is currently a part of the USSR, and his original name was said to be Bodnarenko, Rumanized for political convenience. The young Bodnaras served as an artillery officer in the Rumanian Army. Between the two World Wars he deserted by skating across the frozen-Dniester River into Russia, carrying secret documents about Rumanian army organization. Court-martialed and found guilty of treason *in absentia*, he enrolled in an NKVD school and acquired

Soviet citizenship. Eventually he returned to Rumania with a beard and a revolutionary mission. He was recognized and denounced by a fellow officer. After a spell in jail, he escaped to Russia again. In 1944 he turned up in Bucharest in time to join the King's plot against the Nazis. With the Red Army established, he became head of the Rumanian Secret Police—and master of Rumania with the support of a half-million Russian troops.

Ana Pauker, Rumania's "Pasionaria," was another typical product of the Comintern hothouse for international revolt. In 1924 Comintern agents whisked Ana out of Rumania to save her from arrest. She worked with Communist undergrounds in France and Switzerland, returned to Rumania to lead a railway strike, went to jail, escaped to Moscow and Soviet citizenship. Back in Rumania by 1935, she was re-arrested and sentenced to ten years after a sensational trial in which Henri Barbusse led the chorus of her European defense. Ana went to Moscow in 1941 after an exchange of political prisoners. Her husband was executed in Russia for "Trotskyism." Undaunted in her loyalties, she returned with the Red Army in 1944 as a political instructor in Soviet-occupied Moldavia. When the rest of the country was occupied she became Moscow's ace representative in the Central Committee of the Rumanian Communist Party.

Most experienced Communist veteran of Rumanian jails, appropriately enough, was Teohari Georgescu, now in charge of jails by virtue of his ascension to the rank of Interior Minister. Georgescu might be expected to know the most tested methods for obtaining "confessions," and even be forgiven somewhat for using them. "I've tasted them in my skin," he told me in his colorful Rumanian idiom. "The fascist regimes arrested me twenty-five times. They kept me in jail, on and off, for over seven years. They broke all my fingers. They used to put a big book on my chest, and then beat on the book with an iron bar, not to leave any tell-tale marks."

In public speeches and patriotic newspaper articles, these Communist leaders proclaimed their vibrant loyalty to Rumania first, last and all the time. But in the private offices of the Party chiefs, the picture which held the place of honor on the wall was that of Joseph Stalin, and if there was room for more, it was filled up with Lenin, Marx and Engels.

GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY

The Armistice entitled the Russians to requisition all transportation equipment for the duration of hostilities—but after the shooting ended the Red Army declined to restore most of it, writing it off as

legitimate war booty "captured" during the Russian advance. Thus they "borrowed" 23,000 of Rumania's freightcars and 250 locomotives. (Eighteen months later they agreed to return 1,500 cars and 115 locomotives previously listed as booty, and "lend" the Rumanian State Railways some 5,000 more cars.) They took 375 of Rumania's 608 barges and tugs. Of her 44,000 automobiles and trucks they appropriated 21,000, the ones that were still running. Twenty-five per cent of the oil industry's transport was seized outright, 20 per cent more was immobilized through filching of tires and spare parts, and no less than 57,000 tons of oilfield equipment were carted away.

Formal reparations against Rumania totaled \$300,000,000, reasonable enough on paper, but when it was worked out in terms of low 1938 prices it came to twice as much—and it was only a fraction of what the Russians really took. According to figures presented by the U. S. at the Paris Peace Conference (and inadvertently confirmed by the official Rumanian delegation), the total Russian grab in Rumania came to a round two billion dollars.

Besides reparations, Rumania was required to return all materials and valuables removed from ex-Rumanian Soviet territories—Bessarabia and Bukovina—which Stalin took in 1940 and which the Rumanian armies took back in Hitler's 1941 invasion of the USSR. This proved a bottomless sack into which Soviet "reclamation" inspectors poured practically anything they wished. They constituted themselves final judge of what was, or was not, property taken from the lost provinces. When the materials were consumed or missing, substitute goods selected by the Russians had to be furnished. Among other such substitutes, they ordered and received 15,000 Thermos bottles, 100,000 spoons, 200,000 enameled tin cups, 60,000 brassières, 6,000 women's suits, and an unrecorded quantity of silk stockings, panties and handbags. An official order for five million contraceptives was never filled, because of the rubber shortage.

In Rumania the "50-50" trade-control companies bloomed even more easily than in Hungary because nobody in the Bucharest Government dared to stick his neck out. The Russians had no trouble setting up five *Sovrom* (Soviet-Rumanian) combines—in banking, oil, timber, shipping and aviation. When the important Creditul Minier Oil Company and the Rumanian Danube Company declined to enter their respective *Sovrom*, the Bucharest Foreign Trade Office arbitrarily signed them in without their consent. Behind a front of Rumanian board chairmen the Russians installed their own experts as managers. After these managers, there followed thousands of "assistants," really colonists with

their wives and families, to settle in various key parts of Rumania. The important Black Sea port of Constanta became virtually an all-Russian city.

Sovrombank was established by merger of five Rumanian banks, whose German, Italian and Hungarian capital became the Russian's "Potsdam investment." This "50-50" holding company thereafter financed all Russian and Russo-Rumanian enterprises in the country. It set a new high in traditionally skinflint Rumanian bank rates: up to 36 per cent yearly and 10 per cent monthly. In two years' time, it controlled more than half of Rumanian banking.

To *Sovromtransport* the Russians contributed the Danube river boats they had previously hooked from the Rumanians. In exchange, the Rumanians gave the new combine ownership of all installations in the main ports and a thirty-year lease on nearly all docks. Rumania became totally dependent on *Sovromtransport* for all Danube shipping. Under Russian management, the company charged three times more than Western shippers for seagoing freight and even twice the rates of all-Russian companies. Via *Sovromtransport*, it cost as much to ship a Citroën from Marseilles to Constanta as it did to buy the Citroën. A subsidiary operated most of Rumania's road transport.

To *Sovrompetrol* the Russians brought as "ex-German" assets the Columbia, Concordia and other oilfields claimed by Franco-Belgian interests as their property acquired by the Germans during the war. Then the Soviets added a small quantity of tubular and drilling equipment, some of it loot from Hungary, Austria and Germany, and the rest of it booty originally taken from U. S. and British oilfields in Rumania. Under Communist inspiration, the government not only exempted *Sovrompetrol* from the mining taxes which all other companies had to pay but yielded up to the combine 75 per cent of the State's crude oil royalties from those firms. In February, 1947, this subsidy was increased to 100 per cent of the State's royalties *plus* the crude oil which the other companies paid in taxes. *Sovrompetrol* was further favored with new concessions for prospecting, while its competitors were shut out.

Oil was Rumania's richest natural resource but under the Russians the Rumanians got precious little of it. In addition to reparations, the Armistice had required Rumania to supply extra quantities of oil for the Red Army's use during the remainder of the war. The war had ended, as far as one could see, in May, 1945, but over two years later Rumania was still delivering about 10,000 tons of oil monthly, apart from reparations, for the Red Army's needs "at the front." Russian thirst for oil cut the domestic supply so low that factories had to be

shut down and railway service reduced. What little oil went abroad was sold at Russia's profit rather than Rumania's.

Over and above the drainage of resources by reparations and lopsided "50-50" partnerships—for all of which the Rumanian Communists ecstatically applauded Soviet "generosity"—lay the steady, dead weight of Soviet occupation. Maintenance of the Red Army on Rumanian soil literally ate the Rumanian people out of house and home. Grain, of which Rumania had exported two million tons yearly before the war, had to be imported in the first year after the war. When I went back to Rumania for a second time, in mid-1946, the peasants of Moldavia were haunting the railway stations, imploring conductors to put them on a train which could take them someplace where there was food. The peasants, not the plutocratic bourgeois enemies of the Soviets, were the real victims of the Occupation. Before the middle of 1947, famine was raging in Rumania, traditional breadbasket of Europe. With Soviet authorization, a Rumanian mission went seeking food in—of all places—the U. S.

It could be argued that Russia was not mostly to blame for fertile Rumania's sudden plague of hunger. The unprecedented drought which ravaged large parts of the country in 1946-47 certainly contributed heavily to the general distress. But the drought could not possibly be dragged in to account for Rumania's equally drastic financial collapse.

There was nothing intrinsically wrong with Rumanian money. It had even been able to withstand the onslaught of the ruble at the outset of the Occupation, when the Soviets had arbitrarily decreed that the rubles of Red Army troops must be redeemed for nearly three times their real value. This had increased by 25 per cent the total of lei in circulation at the time—and encouraged the smuggling into Rumania of great quantities of rubles from surrounding countries, where the exchange rate was lower. Despite this, the leu only lost a relatively small portion of its sturdiness. Rumania's paper money began to hurtle downhill in 1947, as all foreign experts except Russian agreed, simply because there was nothing to buy with the money. The double-edged Soviet policy of emptying Rumania of goods and at the same time shutting Rumania off from Western machinery and raw materials was what set Rumania, like Hungary, on her skyrocket ride to inflationary ruin. To halt the runaway at least temporarily, the government in late 1947 stabilized Rumania's money at one-twenty thousandth of its old value.

While the Russians were elbowing their way to complete dominion over Rumania, Anglo-American policy labored under the familiar diplomatic restraints, cautions and prohibitions.

On the political front, the "poor relation" status of our delegates to the Allied Control Commission for Rumania was even worse than in Hungary, at least for the United States. Matters came to such a sorry pass that the puppet Rumanian Government, cocky in its knowledge of Soviet approval, arrested or kidnapped several Rumanian employees of the American services. The purpose of this operation was to lower our prestige and hamper the one function which the missions were still performing with some effect: observing and reporting on the state of civil liberties in Rumania. When we protested, the Bucharest Government loftily informed us that it would take orders "only from the Allied Control Commission"—that is to say, Colonel General Ivan Susaikov, the ACC's Soviet Chairman.

Pro-Allied Rumanians ruefully recalled that Three-Power signature of the Armistice had sent joyful crowds into Bucharest's streets shouting "U. S. A! U. S. A.!" under the mistaken impression that the U. S. was going to have a hand in settling Rumania's future. These initials now had come to mean "*Unde Sunt Amerikani?*"—Where are the Americans?

BOUT OF BUCHAREST

In going over the section above, the reader may have occasionally muttered to himself: "Here's where I came in." This book gets easier to write as we pass from one country to the next. It took four chapters to tell the story of Yugoslavia adequately, only one long chapter to explain Hungary, and the present chapter on Rumania will be half as long as the Hungarian. This is made possible by courtesy of the Comintern and the Kremlin. Immediate problems varied from one region to the next, and were met with high versatility—but the underlying pattern of the drive toward power was the same everywhere. In fact, it seemed almost as if international Communism employed a flying squadron of politico-economic specialists who dashed about from country to country in Russia's Europe, building and repairing with a variety of standard tools out of the same kit.

The radical difference between Rumania and Hungary was that Hungary had no government with which the Red Army needed to consult. When the Russians entered Hungary, the only government available was the Nazi regime, which decamped shortly afterward to Austria. The Russians were therefore free to *create* a government to

their own liking, unhampered by legalistic niceties. This government, having done nothing to clear the way for the Russians because it was not in existence when they arrived, could claim no loyalty from them.

In Rumania, however, the Russians had to deal with an anti-Nazi government which had done a great deal for the Russians. In fact, it had overthrown the old regime. It was a coalition of all available pro-Allied factions, and among them the leftist groups were by no means the most important.

The Russian problem in Rumania, therefore, was not how to invent a government which the Communists could dominate, but how to get rid of a government to which the Russians were obligated and in which the Communist Party was only one of numerous contributing elements. The Russians and the Communists solved this problem very handily, and the way they did it throws further light on the nature and meaning of Russia's Europe for the rest of us.

Rumanian abandonment of Hitler, achieved in the *coup d'état* of August 23, 1944, had been planned by three groups. The first was the two "historical" parties, so called because they had been the two rival major parties alternating in power in prewar constitutional Rumania: the National Liberals and the National Peasants. The second group consisted of the two leftist parties: the Communists, who had been illegal before the war, and the Social Democrats, who had been insignificant. The third group was King Michael and his Court and Army advisers.

The historical parties and the leftist parties each claimed later that their group did all the important work to bring Rumania over to the Allied side and that the other group's contribution was negligible. Neither claim was true—although the historical parties could boast longer and more daring activity. Before the coup, Iuliu Maniu, the National Peasant leader, initiated Armistice negotiations with the Allies in Cairo and accepted their terms (which the Russians later revised, turning the genuine Three-Power Allied Control Commission envisaged at Cairo into a Soviet-managed nonentity). After the coup, the armed Bucharest factory workers helped fight the Germans in Bucharest. But nobody denied that the coup itself was executed by the young King, and that the Army made it stick.

The uprising had been set for August 26th. It came off three days earlier in order to prevent Marshal Ion Antonescu from blocking it. The dictator was haranguing the King in a stormy audience when Michael

coolly summoned the Palace Guards and had him arrested, along with various members of his pro-Nazi cabinet.

Michael immediately issued a proclamation announcing abolition of the dictatorship and his intention to conclude an Armistice with the Allies. He named a new government, headed by General George Sanatescu, chief of his military cabinet.

The coup was militarily successful because all the Rumanian commanders remained loyal to the King and because withdrawals of German forces to Poland had left the German garrison in Rumania weak. The German commander in Bucharest accepted Michael's ultimatum to evacuate peaceably—but ordered his troops to attack two hours later. A spirited battle on Bucharest's outskirts, in which American fliers helped by bombing German troop concentrations, gave Michael complete command of his capital after only four days. Some 1,200 other American fliers—shot down and interned by the Rumanians in earlier raids—were also very useful against the Germans in Bucharest. The day after the coup, the fliers volunteered to join the armed patrol of the city. The sudden appearance of these men in American uniform started the rumor that parachute troops had landed—and scared the Germans badly.

On the major Russo-German front along the Pruth River, the Rumanian commanders meanwhile obeyed Michael's orders not to resist the Russians. The Rumanian line parted to allow the Red Army through. The Germans' attack on Bucharest gave the King the excuse he needed to declare war against the Reich and Hungary. In about a week the new "co-belligerents" had pummelled the German position in Rumania sufficiently for the Red Army to advance to within storming distance of the Hungarian frontier.

The military phase of the coup accomplished itself with sheerly miraculous smoothness. Trouble set in only after the shooting was over and the conspiratorial partners in the coup had to settle down to running the country.

The "historical" parties were led by old men, experienced in the quiet arts of government but helpless in the confusion created by the Red Army's presence. The Social-Democrats were unimportant. So were the Communists, numerically. At the time of the coup they had only a few hundred members. But they knew what they wanted, and they were organized to get it.

The first thing they did was win the support of some twenty-five thousand workers in the Bucharest area by appropriate promises. Then they organized a "National Democratic Front" (NDF). It was com-

posed of the Communists, the Social-Democrats, a "Union of Patriots" made up of a few professors and intellectuals under Communist inspiration, and a "Plowman's Front" led by Petru Groza, an obscure provincial landowner with a strong voice, a redoubtable mien and an itch for public office. That automatically made four "people's parties," against two "reactionary" parties.

Because the Sanatescu Government lacked any common program, the NDF set up a hue and a cry for reforms which were practical impossibilities. They demanded an agrarian reform to be accomplished in ten weeks; immediate control of large industries by the workers; immediate nationalization of eighteen large banks. Meanwhile the Russians were clamoring for heavy reparations and food and supplies for a fighting army of more than one million men. Application of the proposed reforms at that moment would have paralyzed everything.

By October the Communists felt strong enough to experiment with a bit of direct action. They staged riotous public meetings in numerous towns, passed resolutions condemning the public authorities, then marched on the local official buildings and forcibly seized the administration. They also grabbed various factories, and voted themselves control of public utilities in Bucharest. The Government did not dare to interfere, for fear of Russian displeasure, especially since the Soviet press was loudly denouncing delays in reparations deliveries.

Under this pressure, Sanatescu's Government toppled on November 4th. The King kept him as Premier, but replaced the other generals and experts with an all-party cabinet. Petru Groza became Vice-Premier. The Communists secured, among other posts, the Justice Ministry. Round One.

Andrei Vishinsky, Soviet Vice-Commissar of Foreign Affairs, now arrived in Bucharest. Ostensibly there to see how Rumania was fulfilling the Armistice conditions, he consulted extensively with leaders of the NDF, which set itself up as a separate bloc inside the "coalition" Government. Then the Communists opened a new propaganda line. They concentrated their attack on Juliu Maniu, the old National Peasant leader. Nationwide meetings began denouncing him as a fascist. The leftists demanded the portfolios of War and Interior as the price of their remaining in the cabinet.

On December 4th, King Michael intervened. He told Vishinsky that Communist agitation was paralyzing the administration and economy. If the Soviet authorities continued to encourage the Communists, the King would be compelled to abdicate, no longer being able to fulfill his constitutional role of assuring orderly and legitimate government.

This was on the eve of the Big Three meeting at Yalta. Michael's departure would have exposed Stalin to embarrassing questions from his British and American colleagues. Vishinsky had also discovered that the Communists represented nobody except a few Bucharest factory workers. He therefore assured the King that the Russians were not responsible for the Communists and that Moscow was interested exclusively in Rumanian fulfillment of the Armistice terms.

The next day the Communists withdrew their demands for the Defense and Interior Ministries.

The day after that, December 6th, a new Government was formed. The only important change was that General Nicolae Radescu, chief of the General Staff, replaced Sanatescu as Premier and also took over the Interior Ministry. But Teohari Georgescu, a Communist, became Under-secretary in the Interior Ministry. Round Two.

After Yalta, the political truce ended. Communist-provoked riots again began convulsing the country. The purpose was to discredit and panic the government.

The Communist Under-secretary of Interior flouted Radescu's orders to throw out another Communist who had installed himself as Police Prefect at Craiova. When Radescu sent troops to quell the rioters, Communists fired tommygun blasts through his windows. On February 24th, government employees, factory hands and students shepherded by armed detachments of the NDF "spontaneously" marched to a monster demonstration in the Palace Square, demanding Radescu's resignation. More shooting, which the Soviets blamed on the Rumanian police, as a preliminary to disarming it. The Premier, attempting to denounce the Communists in a public speech, found the hall occupied by Communists, who drove him into the street.

On February 27th, Vishinsky flew up from Moscow for a second historic interview with King Michael. This time the Vice-Commissar did the talking, banged on the table, in fact, and slammed the heavy oak doors in the Palace so hard the plaster chipped off the wall. Radescu resigned—and took refuge in the British mission.

Vishinsky now insisted on Petru Groza as Premier. He warned Michael that refusal to appoint Groza would be a hostile act against the USSR, from which Rumania's independence might not survive. The King again wanted to abdicate. But the chiefs of the old parties urged him to remain as a patriotic duty, at whatever cost, because without him the country would be leaderless.

So Vishinsky won. The historical parties rejected an offer of a few meaningless minor posts in the cabinet. On March 6th, a new govern-

ment was proclaimed. It had the ultra-respectable and ultra-pliable Groza as stooge Premier, the Communist Georgescu as Interior Minister, the Communist Patrascanu as Justice Minister, the Communist P. Constantinescu-Jassy as Propaganda Minister—and no representative of the historical parties which had helped take Rumania out of the war. Round Three knockout.

FAILURE OF A COMMISSION

The fiction of a coalition government was preserved by giving cabinet posts to renegade groups which detached themselves from the Liberal and Peasant parties to travel the Communist road. These splinters were headed by men once violently pro-fascist and anti-Soviet who had since undergone a profound change of heart. Such dubious democrats were necessary because the Communists knew they were too pitifully weak to attempt to govern by themselves.

Later I asked Communist chief Bodnaras how he could reconcile his anti-fascism with his acceptance of known fascists as his colleagues. Bodnaras took a long look at me, and then spoke in his rumbling, deliberate voice: "Our mission is to crush fascism. But we are realists. There is only one sound rule in politics: never ask where a man came from; only ask where he is going. Anybody who at a given moment is willing to do work useful to a given cause is a welcome ally. Sentiment has no place in history."

Sentiment indeed was notably lacking in subsequent policy toward the historical parties. Their newspapers were suppressed, printing plants seized by Government parties, clubhouses closed down, meetings broken up, organizers beaten and arrested. With the police disarmed, its functions were usurped by the NDF's armed militia, about 8,000 strong in Bucharest, which fell to purging the capital of all "fascist elements."

This sort of thing went on until August, when Michael and the Opposition parties could stand no more of it. Encouraged by Washington and London, the King called on Groza to resign. When Groza refused, Michael cut relations with the Government and appealed to the Big Three to make good on their pledges for establishment of democracy in Rumania.

A September meeting of the Foreign Ministers in London ended with complete stalemate over eastern Europe. For three more months, the King was left dangling on the limb where poor Anglo-American diplomatic staffwork had placed him. Then, at Moscow in early December, the Foreign Ministers agreed to dispatch a Three-Power Commission

to Bucharest. This commission would "advise" the King that two new Ministers "truly representative" of the opposition parties should join the government and that the government then "should give assurances concerning the grant of freedom" of press, speech, religion and assembly as a prelude to democratic elections. After that, the way would be clear for diplomatic recognition of the regime.

As usual, the bargain looked good in print but became a snare and a delusion when put into effect.

I was in Bucharest when the commission arrived. Britain and the United States were represented by their respective ambassadors in the USSR, Sir Archibald Clark-Kerr (later Ambassador to Washington as Lord Inverchapel) and W. Averell Harriman (later Secretary of Commerce). Both were earnest men, skillful negotiators, but fresh out of their Moscow code rooms and innocent as babes of the convolutions of Rumanian politics. The Soviet member, however, was the veteran Vishinsky, architect of the Groza Government, and Stalin's No. 1 troubleshooter at Balkan dilemmas.

The Moscow Agreement had implied, it seemed to all reasonable men, that Russia as well as the Allies considered the Opposition a legitimate element in Rumanian politics. But, on the very night of his arrival, Vishinsky made it clear he would have nothing to do with the Opposition. In a speech at the Rumanian Army Club he dismissed the historical parties as "croaking ravens."

The Allied commissioners started out with the notion that the Opposition ministers would be chosen by the commission in consultation with the King and the historical parties, and so assured the leaders of the latter. But Vishinsky read the Moscow decision to mean that the Groza government must have the decisive voice in the selection—although this Groza government was not recognized by the democracies. A dreary week of wrangling followed. Vishinsky's vote turned down the Opposition's first nominees, presumably because the Government had found them unacceptable, but actually because the candidates were too strong. The Allied commissioners finally reversed themselves and advised the Opposition to advance some second-string candidates. To show the absurdity of the whole procedure, the historical parties then angrily produced a slate of no less than twenty names. At American request, this was reduced to a list of five from each party. Vishinsky and the government blackballed two from each list, the Anglo-American commissioners struck off two from each, the surviving name on each was ratified by all, and the meaningless bargain was sealed.

Vishinsky's success in shaping the enlarged cabinet to his precise taste further lowered Allied prestige and Opposition spirits. The Vice-Com-

missar departed, frankly telling the press at Baneasa Airport: "I have never left Rumania so light-heartedly as today." Clark-Kerr and Harri-man stayed on long enough to get assurances from Groza that the Opposition would be allowed to publish newspapers and carry on political activities, and that democratic elections would be held by May, 1946, at the very latest.

The Russian problem from here on in was how to create the impression that Groza was making good on these assurances, in order to hold the Allies to their pledge of recognition, and how to sabotage these assurances, in order to keep the Opposition from winning the elections.

First of all, the two Opposition representatives in the Government were named "Ministers of State." This meant they had no portfolios—and no authority. The regime issued important decrees in the cabinet's name without consulting the "Ministers of State" or even holding a cabinet meeting. The chief function of the two Ministers became the writing of innumerable memoranda to the Premier against violations of the Moscow Agreement.

The Government fulfilled the letter of its pledges of press liberty by permitting each of the Opposition parties to publish one daily paper. This made a total of two anti-Government newspapers while the pro-Government parties, unions, fronts, etc., had several dozen. According to the regime, however, the Opposition had sixteen newspapers. This interesting figure was achieved by counting as "opposition" all the miscellaneous publications not specifically Government—including the paper of the Red Army of Occupation.

Ever since Liberation, there had been a censorship of the Rumanian press. The excuse for it was that it was needed to enforce observance of the Armistice, which prohibited any criticism of the Russians. This pretext covered the suppression of an infinity of articles which had little to do with the Russians but did annoy the Government. After Moscow, the censorship seemed to relax. At least, the censors stopped returning proofs bearing a big rejection stamp. In this way, no documentary evidence of censorship was produced.

But there were other ways to keep the press under leash. If an article offended the Government, the censor would simply hold the proof "for further study"—until it had been pondered into the news grave. Or the composing-room workers could refuse to print "reactionary" articles for the newspapers which paid their wages. The Government righteously declined to ban such unofficial censorship, on the ground that it could not dictate to "the democratic conscience of free men." The

Communists, of course, controlled the printing and other trade unions. Once, when I pointed out that his own Government had guaranteed press liberty, the foreman of one composing-room crew replied: "In this shop I am the Government!"

Equally effective was the Government's continued control of newsprint distribution, a device which restricted readers instead of mere words. The National Peasant organ, *Dreptatea*, quickly became Rumania's most popular paper. Its exposés of government foibles made delightful reading for a public bored by unremitting praise of Petru Groza. Yet *Dreptatea* received only five spools of newsprint daily, hardly enough for 50,000 copies, when it could easily have sold 200,000 copies. *Scanteia*, the Communist organ, got twenty-two spools, making it hog-rich in surplus paper—which it then sold to less-favored journals at black-market prices.

The Moscow agreement also stipulated that there should be freedom of assembly and political activity. Where foreign correspondents were likely to turn up, within perhaps a day's radius of the capital, there was little overt interference with Opposition meetings in the first months after the departure of the Three-Power Commission. But in remote Arad, National Peasant headquarters were given the crowbar treatment by a political strong-arm squad; the furniture and seven local leaders sustained various injuries, including one fractured skull. These headquarters were situated opposite the police station, which remained somnolent throughout the raid.

From time to time, the two Allied Governments would publicly deplore the sad state of liberty in Rumania, writing notes half doleful and half indignant which the Groza regime glibly countered by flat denials that freedom was anything but complete. In due course, the two Western democracies proceeded nevertheless to recognize the Government. Having been maneuvered at Moscow into promising to do this if democratic liberties were assured, Britain and the U.S. made good although it was obvious the "assurances" were largely theoretical.

In Allied circles, feeling was frankly defeatist. "What would we gain by delaying recognition?" one of the top Allied diplomats in Bucharest told me. "The Russians are here, and we aren't. Everything the Government does is okayed first by the Russians. We can't send an army out to fix things we don't like. In normal countries, we would have access to the people, but here we're almost as remote as if we were at war. The best we can do is continue to sound off against injustices whenever we hear of them. Our means of compulsion are very limited."

The elections promised for May, 1946, were delayed until November. It took the Communists that long to make sure there would be no unpleasant surprises and to concoct an election law which would guarantee a Government victory.

In particular, the Social-Democrats had to be persuaded to go before the voters on a "common list" with the Communists. Again as in Hungary, the Communists insisted on this because of the poor showing they knew they would make if they ran separately. At the Social-Democratic party congress called to consider the "common list" proposition, a Cabinet Minister was seen distributing big bundles of money to delegates in advance payment for their favorable vote. Most of the genuine Socialists in the party, including its leader, Titel Petrescu, were forced into the Opposition and were immediately labeled as fascists.

When I returned to Rumania in the summer of 1946, the "campaign" was at last under way.

The night I reached Bucharest, the entire audience of a movie house was locked up because one spectator hissed a government propaganda film. That week end, the two Opposition "Ministers of State" were separately and individually waylaid in different parts of the country by "unidentified assailants" and prevented from speaking at mass meetings of their parties. Premier Groza announced that the peasants would be "mercilessly punished" if they didn't vote right. Communist Boss Bodnaras himself assured all comers that "we will win, no matter how."

Came Election Day. The octogenarian Liberal leader, Dinu Bratianu, charged that "only the façade of freedom existed in Bucharest, while in the rest of the country even the facsimile was blotted out." In many polling places, Opposition representatives were barred from watching or counting the vote. Anti-government voters were disqualified by election committees loaded with government "inspectors." Other voters were held up at road blocks outside the villages, beaten and dispersed.

When citizens tried to register their protests at an office specially set up for the purpose in Bucharest by the American Mission, they found the Mission surrounded and barricaded by the police. (It is important to remember that Rumania was a defeated ex-Nazi satellite, and that the U.S. was one of the occupying powers.)

Nevertheless, the first returns were so unpleasant that the infuriated Russian commander in chief, Susaikov, proposed arresting Premier Groza and the other non-Communist ministers for having double-crossed the Soviet Union. The General was dissuaded only by Communist assurances that the final returns would be "cooked" to show a more agreeable result. And so they were.

The "Democratic Bloc" plus other pro-government groups "won"

91 per cent of the seats. The Opposition got 35 places—as against 348 for the Bloc. Modestly, the Communists accepted third place among the government parties in the number of seats arbitrarily allotted to each by pre-election agreement. “An unprecedented display of democracy,” said Tass, the Soviet news agency.

The next and final step was to drive the Opposition out of existence altogether. Discovering various “plots” during 1947 to topple the regime, the government corralled more than 2,000 “suspects” in verminous cells. They were fed starvation rations and confined under conditions reminiscent of Dachau—despite a peace treaty which guaranteed civil liberties in Rumania. The climax came with arrest of the main Peasant leaders themselves. Not even the Germans had dared to touch Iuliu Maniu, but the Communists clapped the ailing, 72-year-old idol of the Rumanian peasantry into jail, outlawed his party and threw all its deputies out of Parliament.

CASE FOR THE DEFENSE

From such evidence, it is obvious that Rumania under Soviet occupation was developing into something rather remote from democracy, even by the most complicated Russian definition of democracy. The question now arises: Did we have any right to expect Rumania to be a democracy? And the answer is no.

If Rumania were the *only* sample of Soviet rule in conquered eastern Europe, no fair-minded man could have wholly condemned the Russians—and the Communists—for their rough-and-ready tactics, not if he had any knowledge of Rumanian history and customs. And this book would certainly not have been written. Democracy requires democrats, a commodity in which Rumania was strikingly deficient.

I had a very gratifying interview with Father Constantin Burducea when he was Minister of Religions in the Groza cabinet. The Minister looked most venerable, a proper shepherd of the varied Rumanian cults, in his orthodox black silk soutane buttoned up at the throat like a Russian blouse. His dignity was lightened to precisely the correct degree by careful smiles and a mouthful of gold teeth.

Father Burducea confirmed what the Grand Rabbi had already told me: that all religions in Rumania enjoyed absolute equality. “My government,” said the Minister, “has made racial discrimination punishable by three months to three years in prison. I have ordered the clergy to fight every sign of anti-Semitism. For the new Rumania, anti-Semitism means fascism.”

I repeat, my interview was very gratifying—except that not so long

before, Father Burducea had been a high-ranking member of the Iron Guard, green-shirted, gun-toting equivalent of Hitler's Brownshirts(!) Burducea was a high enough member to wear the decoration of the *Buna Vestire*, awarded to only thirty-two Guardists.

The good Father was not the only exotic character in the liberty-loving Groza Government. George Tatarescu as Premier had abolished all political parties to pave the way for King Carol's dictatorship, and signed a pact with the Germans for the *Wehrmacht's* entry into Rumania. But after the Soviet arrival, he went off the list of war criminals—by arrangement with the Communists—and became Groza's Vice-Premier. Lotar Radaceanu, later Minister of Labor and a belligerent Social-Democrat, had served in Carol's totalitarian "Renaissance Front," worked zealously for the "Romanization" of the national economy (which meant driving out all the Jews), and made a handsome profit in business with the Germans.

Why were such people in power? Because the Communists, not having enough political strength—apart from the Red Army—to form a government of their own, had to manufacture one by collecting personalities with some standing in Rumanian politics. Rumania being the kind of country it was, such personalities were likely to have a rather inconvenient pro-fascist history.

Nor did the record of the Opposition parties offer any happy portents for the future of Rumanian democracy.

Juliu Maniu, the National Peasant Leader, was renowned for his incorruptibility in the old Rumania, where political corruption had reached legendary proportions even for the Balkans. Maniu's stature as a statesman was European, not Balkan. His name enjoyed universal esteem. Even Stalin said of him—before Maniu came out openly against Communist domination—that he was the one man in Rumania the Russians could trust. Dinu Bratianu, the National Liberal leader, was a white-whiskered old gentleman of the Gallic school. There were other personalities in Rumania of high democratic sentiment and considerable courage, like Rica Georgescu, manager of Standard Oil of N. J.'s Romano-Americana Oil Company, who relayed Armistice messages to Cairo and military information to Moscow on a radio transmitter *inside* the Bucharest political police jail where he was an inmate until the King's coup against the Nazis! But an underlying motif in the middle levels and among the supporters of both parties was old-fashioned reaction.

The Liberals had governed Rumania for most of the two decades between World War I and King Carol's dictatorship. Champions of

monopoly capitalism, they tried to industrialize agrarian Rumania behind high tariff walls, sweating the inflated costs of machinery and raw materials out of the workers and peasants. Their land distribution policy was no genuine reform but only a device to forestall contagion from the Bolshevik revolution in nearby Russia—and they spoiled its effect by failing to supply the peasantry with tools and credits. Under their rule, it has been aptly said, there were three classes of Rumanians: “the poor ones, the very poor ones, and the excessively poor ones.”*

It was the Liberals who developed the *Sigurantsa* police into the political weapon inherited by the Communist regime, and it was the Liberals who raised the cry of “Bolshevism” to smother all democratic protest against them. During their regime they outlawed the Communist and Socialist press and movements, and enforced a dictatorial censorship.

The National Peasants loosened the grip of native capitalism by encouraging foreign investments in Rumanian industry. They also lifted censorship. They even held one tolerably free election. But the National Peasants, in power, lost much of the eloquent radicalism they had displayed when in opposition. In 1934 a National Peasant Government ordered police to shoot strikers at the Grivitsa railway yards, where four hundred died. At one time, the National Peasants actually made an electoral alliance with the murderous Iron Guard.

Both historical parties, in their time, imprisoned labor leaders. (It was charged, with much truth, that Ana Pauker, George Gheorghiu-Dej and other top Rumanian Communist leaders were “invented” by the prewar governments, which rescued them from obscurity by jailing them.) All the political oldsters I met in both parties admitted, with a kind of melancholy grin, that at one time or another in their ingenious careers they had helped to fix an election.

The Rumanians thought of themselves as Latins. They despised the Russians for being Slavs. They joined enthusiastically in the 1941 German invasion of the Soviet Union. The twenty divisions they sent into Russia looted, raped and burned. Back home the people found it pretty easy to fraternize with the Nazis. Later they claimed excessive credit for having turned against them. The rank and file of the Iron Guard rushed for refuge into all the post-Liberation parties—and were cordially accepted by all of them. The transport workers and the printers’ union, now the shock troops of Communism, never lost five

* Emil Lengyel, *The Danube* (New York, 1939), p. 389.

minutes in their faithful operation of fascist Rumania's military railways and their printing of Antonescu's pro-Nazi newspapers. Government employees from all walks of life—proletariat, peasants, bourgeoisie and gentry—were delighted to move into Jewish-owned property expropriated by Antonescu. They showed no noticeable distress over the destruction of a quarter million of Rumania's Jews through war-time deportation and massacre.

Under the Soviets, everybody seemed to have forgotten very quickly that Rumania had been an Axis satellite. There was more food and better living when I first reached Bucharest than in London, incomparably more than in Athens and Belgrade, but you would never guess it from the eternal grumbling. The old mentality and arrogance were returning. I sat as in a nightmare through a student election meeting at Bucharest University where speakers demanded that only "Rumanian born" be elected to office; the same youths acknowledged the applause with the Iron Guard salute. The scrawl "Down with the Jews!" was reappearing on university walls. I heard National Peasant demonstrators chanting as they marched, "*Toți Romanii Cu Noi*"—literally translatable as "All Rumanians With Us" but really meaning "Down With Everybody Except One-hundred-per-cent Rumanians."

In Hungary, no paragon of Christian tolerance, the new regime had at least garroted the top-layer Nazi killers as soon as they could be rounded up and condemned. But in Rumania, significantly, the Communists had tried to win public opinion over by saving twenty-six war criminals from execution. Their death sentences had been commuted to life imprisonment by royal decree on recommendation of the Communist Minister of Justice. (Among those spared was Colonel Modest Isopescu, who explained to the People's Tribunal, "I didn't kill sixty thousand Jews in Transnistria. I only killed sixteen thousand.")

Instead of arresting notorious Jew-baiters and holding them for trial, Communist officials on "purge committees" frequently sold them visas with which to escape the country. Not until June, 1946—twenty-one months after Liberation—did the new Rumania's "National Democratic Front" regime muster enough courage to liquidate any war criminals. Even then, it was the Russians who insisted on it. Those executed were the head man himself, Marshal Antonescu; his Vice-Premier, Mihai Antonescu; his Assistant Interior Minister, Constantin Vasiliu, who had supervised the Jewish deportations, and George Alexeanu, his Governor of Transnistria, Rumanian-occupied province in captured Russian territory where the Jews had been sent to die. After holding

these four more than a year, the Soviets had returned them to Bucharest for trial and punishment.

The execution was hopelessly botched. The Government apparently distrusted regular troops for the job, and collected a firing squad of raw police recruits, more nervous than their targets. Fourteen had rifles, and two had machine pistols. Antonescu's last speech was merely: "Shoot straight, please." In the first ragged volley, Mihai and Alexeanu were killed outright. There were ten seconds of silence while the doctors went around feeling pulses. Then the *coups de grâce*, an agonizingly hesitant succession of rat-tats. The official witnesses distinctly heard the Marshal groan: "Shoot again." It took two full minutes from the first shot to the last.

Nobody dared put a flag at half-mast, but Bucharest next day had the hush of a city in mourning. The late dictator moved instantly to his place in the national martyrology. His body was hardly cold before the legend began growing, with the inevitable Rumanian overtone. My taxi driver told me that "the Russians and the Jews are responsible for Antonescu's murder."

The Rumanian problem, then, was not a simple matter of right and wrong. The Russians could be forgiven for having regarded a substantial segment of the Liberal and National Peasant parties with a melancholy eye. Many of these politicians, who lamented most loudly the "loss" of their democratic rights, had themselves committed varying amounts of mayhem on the body of democracy when they were in power. And the Rumanian masses who protested Soviet intolerance were themselves congenitally intolerant. Even worse, from the Russian point of view, the people and the Opposition parties were inveterate, unreconstructed Russian-haters. In any free election, the Opposition parties would have received an overwhelming majority. Maniu and Bratianu said it would be an 80-per-cent majority—and the leftists confirmed this, privately. Confronted by the logic of geography, the Russians could hardly have been expected to stand by and watch a potentially anti-Soviet regime spring up on one of their most vulnerable frontiers.

All other circumstances being equal, the Rumanian Communists, too, could hardly have been expected to offer much freedom to an Opposition which would have obliterated them and their revolution at the first favorable moment. Nothing could have justified the brutality of the methods used—but Rumania was the one place where the pat Communist argument about the "fascist menace" carried a bit of conviction.

The Communist promise, identical in all parts of Russia's Europe, was that democracy would come *after* reaction had been destroyed. As Bodnaras put it to me once: "We can't risk your kind of democracy. Too many fascists fill the ranks and the leadership of the Opposition parties. Give them a chance, and they'll overthrow us. We must crush them first. After that, there will be all the liberty and democracy you want."

This was the standard Communist justification for police terrorism, gagged newspapers, faked elections and all the other techniques employed for defense of the "people's revolution." As I say, it seemed to make some sense in Rumania. But Rumania, unfortunately for the Communist rhetoricians, was not the only exhibit in the Russian showcase.

To the south, just across the Danube, lay Bulgaria, where the same hue and cry was on against "reactionaries." If we take a close look at that unhappy land, we discover something wobbly in the Communist thesis that democracy must be violated now in order to be cherished later. The Bulgarian people had a solid pro-Russian record. The Opposition leaders in Bulgaria had been courageous anti-Nazis who had fought long and well against fascism. Nevertheless Bulgaria was in the same fix as Rumania—the people tyrannized, the Opposition harried as "enemies of the people," the land plundered of its resources.

9

Bulgaria: Crime and Punishment

Though hardly a bright gallery where all the freedoms shone, Bulgaria between the wars lived under conditions which were easily the most tolerable of all the Balkan varieties of wickedness. This was so despite Bulgarian taste for the bloodier forms of political debate. Practically every politician I met in Sofia had a father, uncle, brother or other kin who had been dispatched by assassins, usually in a manner more suitable to head-hunters than Europeans.

Bulgaria nevertheless was the rural citadel from which the gospel of agrarian equality—the Green Revolution—marched out across southeastern Europe. A sturdy peasantry was the bedrock of Bulgarian society. Votes counted for little more than anywhere else, but it was characteristic of Bulgaria's peculiar state of progress in a darkened corner of the world that all men of twenty-one years of age and over could vote if they wanted to—and all married women. No other country had its soil so evenly divided; no other country had so effectively distributed the land to those who worked it. Instead of feudalism, Bulgaria had co-operatives.

The Slavic Bulgarians were first cousins to the Slavic Russians. They spoke almost the same language. They felt eternally indebted to the Russians and to Russia's Tsar Alexander II for smiting the Turks in 1877 and creating an independent Bulgaria. True, the Russians overstayed their welcome in an unsuccessful attempt to make the new kingdom over in the Muscovite image, but the Bulgars never forgot the Tsar's help against the Ottomans. Red-cobblestoned Sofia's main boulevard was still called "Avenue of the Tsar Liberator"; its main square was still called "Square of the Tsar Liberator." The square was dominated by Bulgaria's most imposing cathedral, called "Alexander Nevsky" in perpetual gratitude to Mother Russia, no matter what her politics.

In World War II, Bulgaria joined Hitler, to the extent of declaring war on the U. S. and Britain (without taking any action against us)

and assisting the Nazis in the occupation of Yugoslavia and Greece. Conduct of the Bulgarian occupation troops, particularly in Greece, won no prizes for enlightenment. Nor did the Bulgarian authorities at home distinguish themselves for humanitarianism. They hanged Communists from the trees and lampposts, cut off their heads, stuck glass under their fingernails, and on occasion flayed them.

But one thing the Bulgarian people declined to let their pro-Nazi rulers do. They declined to let them invade Russia.

It was Russia, in September, 1944, who attacked Bulgaria.

A month earlier, Bulgarian emissaries had begun armistice talks with the British and Americans. The Allies communicated the tentative terms to the Russians, who said they were not interested, since they were not at war with Bulgaria. On September 2nd, a new anti-Nazi government was legally created in Sofia. It immediately withdrew Bulgaria from the war against the Allies. It followed this up by severing relations with Germany. In secret session it also studied a declaration of war against Germany.

Russian propaganda at that time and later charged that the Government made no move against the Germans. The facts were that Moscow gave the Government no time to act. The Bulgarians notified the Soviet legation in Sofia of their decision to make war on Germany. They explained that the actual declaration of war would be delayed not more than two or three days, just long enough to extricate 100,000 Bulgarian troops from a dangerous position inside the German lines in Macedonia. This delay was on the direct advice of Bulgarian War Minister Ivan Marinov (whom the Communists later rewarded as a good and faithful friend by making him Minister to Paris). But on September 5th, the Soviet Union nevertheless declared war and invaded Bulgaria.

The Soviet "war" was purely political. During part of it, Bulgaria was at war with both sides at once, for the Bulgarians on September 8th declared war on the Germans while simultaneously imploring the Russians for peace. The purpose of the Soviet attack was to give Moscow the right to revise the Bulgarian surrender terms, bring the Russians in as conquerors, and justify a Soviet military occupation.

There was no resistance. The invasion was a flower-strewn procession. On the third day, before the Red Army reached Sofia, the anti-Nazi Bulgarian Government was liquidated in a *coup d'état* backed by Moscow. Only then did the Russians agree to grant Bulgaria an armistice.

Another matter which set Bulgaria apart from Rumania was that the Bulgarians, alone of all Germany's allies, had the nerve to defy Hitler's program for annihilation of the Jews. Up to a point, the Bulgarians were no better than the other Balkan peoples in the matter of profitable anti-Semitism. During the war Bulgarian Jews were robbed, expropriated, interned and subjected to abuses of all kinds. Nevertheless, when a servile government in 1943 bowed to Nazi pressure and agreed to deport 15,000 Jews to extermination centers, a spontaneous wave of protest swept the country. Workers, peasants, intellectuals risked their necks at mass meetings to demand protection for their compatriots of Jewish origin against foreign persecution. The frightened government had to abandon its deportation scheme.

So much for the Bulgarian people—no model of democracy, certainly, but with a much higher point score than the other ex-Nazi satellites. Now what about the leaders of the post-Liberation opposition parties? What were they doing during the war?

They were co-operating with the Communist underground! They were building a Fatherland Front of four anti-Nazi parties; the Social-Democrats; the Agrarian National Union; the *Zveno*, a secret military league of anti-German army reserve officers; and the Communists.

The latter constituted the guerrilla resistance movement, only about 3,000 fighters. Short on guns and ammunition, these *Shumtsi* (Forest Men) blew up few bridges and killed few Germans but concentrated on assassinating Bulgarian officials and fomenting provincial disorders, to the embarrassment of the pro-Nazi Sofia regime. Agrarian Party peasants in the villages and Social-Democratic workers in the towns fed and sheltered the guerrillas.

Agrarian leader G. M. Dimitrov waged steady propaganda war on the Germans from a microphone in Cairo. His lieutenant inside Bulgaria, husky Nikola Petkov, was interned four times by the Germans. Petkov told me with a "the-joke's-on-me" smile how, on the night before the Fatherland Front overthrew the Government, he slept in the same bed with the man who later became Premier in the Bulgarian cabinet hand-picked by Moscow.

The original plan of the Fatherland Front had been to revolt against a pro-Nazi regime. But the Communists insisted on carrying out the coup even though a new government had already taken Bulgaria out of the German camp. The Russians were nearing the capital. The Communists, who until then had been a minor factor politically, would

be able to play a major role in Bulgaria's future if they could bring off the "revolution" before the Russians arrived.

On midnight of September 8th-9th, a false air raid alarm gave the prearranged signal. The city's population thronged into the cellars, clearing the streets. As usual, Government ministers began racing out of town in their automobiles. *Zveno* officers walked into the War Ministry through the back door, past sentries who were *Zveno* men, took over the communications room and issued appropriate orders to various military units. Then they chased a few high non-*Zveno* officers through the corridors and captured them. Meanwhile another *Zveno* group went to police headquarters, where some resistance was expected, but the police chief was quite agreeable and advised his men to stay indoors for forty-eight hours. By 2:45 A.M. all the members of the Government had been picked up. Nothing remained except for the pro-*Zveno* regiments around Sofia to occupy key points in the capital.

YESTERDAY'S FRIENDS, TOMORROW'S FOES

One of the members of the ousted Government was Nikola Mushanov, head of the Democratic Party (anti-fascist but not pro-Communist). During the war Mushanov had collaborated with the Fatherland Front. His greatest contribution to the common cause had been his open opposition to the pro-Nazi regime on the floor of Parliament. Mushanov was the one deputy who had dared to speak up in the *Sobranije* and denounce the King's alliance with Germany while high German officers sat in the gallery.

When I visited him in Sofia, the white-haired Mushanov showed me a room in his house. "I call this my *Russian Room*," he chuckled. "You know, Bulgaria maintained full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union during the war. Well, this is the room where the Russian Minister used to meet secretly with the anti-Nazi underground chiefs!"

"Here is *Exhibit B*," Mushanov went on. He held in his hand a verbatim transcript of a wartime broadcast by Radio Moscow. For Mushanov's intrepid protests against the fascist anti-Jewish policy, Moscow and the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party had saluted him as "the conscience of Bulgaria!"

It might have been expected that the Communists would remember such services. Not quite. After the Fatherland Front coup, Mushanov was arrested along with every available member of every Bulgarian government since 1940 and every M.P. who had voted for the war against the Allies. The Communists then engineered a series of mass trials. This was standard Moscow technique: dumping political

opponents into the same prisoners' dock with real traitors and war criminals.

Wherever possible, the accused were sentenced to death and summarily executed. Over 2,000 leading politicians of the old regime were liquidated, including Prince Cyril, who had continued the pro-German policy as Regent after the death of his brother, King Boris. Mushanov, however, could not be canceled out in this manner, because there was obviously no way of proving him a traitor. So he was labeled a "war criminal," given one year in jail—and deprived of his political rights for two years, long enough to get him out of the way.

"The night the verdicts in my trial were announced," Mushanov told me, "we were put into the same cell with fascists who were waiting to be taken out and shot. All night long, guards kept coming in and collecting another batch for execution. That was the worst part of it—the possibility that the guards might make a 'mistake' and take us along too on their next visit."

Liquidation of the other anti-fascist Bulgarian leaders called for more finesse. As partners in the Fatherland Front *coup d'état*, the Agrarian and Social-Democratic groups had to be included in the first post-Liberation Government—the same kind of pro-democratic, all-party coalition as in Rumania. In due time the Bulgarian coalition was destroyed, by procedures at least as cynical as the tactics used across the Danube.

The first man to be picked off was G. M. Dimitrov, the Agrarian leader. He had returned to Sofia immediately after the Red Army's arrival. His wartime broadcasts from Cairo had made him very popular. He was clearly too "dangerous" to be allowed to persevere.

The Communists were hard put for a proper way to get rid of him. It would have been too tall a story to brand him a "fascist," because everybody in Bulgaria had heard his anti-fascist broadcasts. But inspiration finally came: Dimitrov had operated from Cairo; therefore he was pro-British; therefore he must be a foreign agent; therefore he must be anti-Russian—which was a violation of the Armistice. On these grounds the Communists demanded Dimitrov's resignation as Secretary of the Agrarian Party.

Rather than expose his followers to reprisals, Dimitrov quit—and then had to flee for his life to refuge in the American Political Mission. Maynard Barnes, the American Political Representative, gave sanctuary to the fugitive at his official residence in a Sofia suburb. The grounds were surrounded by Soviet troops and Bulgarian militia. Barnes blocked the entrance to the American estate by parking an

automobile athwart the narrow driveway. He manned the walls with armed G.I.'s given him by the Military Mission, and defied the Bulgarian Government's demands to surrender Dimitrov. The siege was lifted only after three months, when the Russians granted Dimitrov a safe-conduct pass with which he escaped the country.

Nikola Petkov succeeded Dimitrov as Agrarian leader in January, 1945. The Communists hoped he would be more amenable. An official Communist history of the wartime resistance mentioned Petkov fulsomely every five pages for his anti-Nazi deeds. "Its exaggerations made me blush," Petkov told his friends. However, when he turned out to be just as independent as his exiled chief, the book was withdrawn from circulation and the Communists began to groom the leader of a dissident Agrarian minority for recognition as *the* Agrarian Party inside the Fatherland Front. The same treatment was given the Social-Democrats for refusal to surrender their identity in the Front. In the latter case, moreover, police seized the printing plant of the Socialist newspaper and casually handed it over to the leader of a minor faction in the party which gave more signs of "national solidarity."

Simultaneous with these maneuvers, the Communists labored to make the coalition too hot a place for any but their friends. It became increasingly plain that the Communists wanted all the power, and would share no part of it with their democratic non-Communist colleagues.

Every time the moderates protested any Communist action, they were immediately assailed as fascists. Before long, the coalition government ceased being a government at all. The real power, thanks to the Red Army's support, lay in the so-called National Committee of the Fatherland Front, which was Communist-dominated and operated independently of the cabinet. Local branches of the Front usurped the provincial administrations. Communist police took their orders from a Communist Interior Minister who took his orders from the Secretary of the Communist Party. Communists were installed in office as provincial governors, county prefects, town mayors and village presidents. These in turn purged all local organisms on a strictly party basis, down to the elementary schools, where Communists became principals, and the hospitals, where village doctors with Party cards became senior physicians and surgeons.

The showdown came over elections. Because of the traditional pro-Russian feelings of the Bulgarian people, Bulgaria's Communists were

much less reticent about going to the polls than their Rumanian colleagues. Besides, they had made faster progress in taping Bulgaria down. Elections were set for August, 1945.

The Communists' formula for a democratic election was the good old "common list." When the Agrarians and Socialists insisted on running separately, in order to find out just where each party stood in the country's esteem, the Communists were outraged. "A cowardly desertion," cried the official radio, "an act of hostility against the people!" Campaign rallies of the new Opposition—whose leaders were still in the cabinet—were broken up by strong-arm squads. Provincial Opposition candidates were subjected to a variety of harassments. These ranged from relatively minor disasters such as a determined effort to pickle one Agrarian speaker in a half-filled wine barrel, to the more decisive technique of shooting another Agrarian dead in his bed. After some weeks of such courtesies, six anti-Communist ministers resigned from the cabinet and demanded that the elections be postponed until they could be held properly under Allied supervision.

Britain and the U. S. intervened effectively at this point. Their protests succeeded in postponing the elections until November, and compelled the Russians to make the Government loosen the gags on the Opposition press, as a minimum concession to the Allies. But when the campaign was resumed, terrorist tactics again stopped the Opposition parties cold. Finally Petkov and his colleagues decided on a total boycott of the elections—exactly as the Opposition was doing at about the same time in neighboring Yugoslavia.

This left the field clear to Communists and their fellow travelers, who ran on a single ticket in a sham plebiscite. Nationwide visitations were made on private homes November 17th, the night before elections, to warn the citizens that failure to turn up at the polls would be observed and remembered. The next day, naturally, the Government tabulated an astronomical victory—no less than 88 per cent. In the new Parliament, the only party not entirely an echo of the Communists was the *Zveno*, which had played the central role in the Fatherland Front coup. But this group had only 46 seats, arbitrarily allotted, out of 277, and rarely risked talking out of turn. Bulgaria now had a burlesque Parliament, which generally danced with unanimous perfection to Communist strings.

COMRADE DIMITROV GETS A MAJORITY

The Western democracies demurred when the beaming Soviets called on them to extend recognition to this prodigious young democracy arising in Bulgaria. In December, 1945, the same Council

of Foreign Ministers which sent a Three-Power Commission to broaden the government and obtain assurances of a free election in Rumania also agreed that two Opposition representatives should enter the Bulgarian Government.

But no Three-Power Commission went to Sofia. The Soviets persuaded us it wasn't necessary, since "elections" had already been held. All that was required was to get the Opposition into the cabinet—and the Bulgarians could settle that themselves, with Comrade Vishinsky's help. So the doughty Soviet Vice-Commissar went to Sofia alone.

There he found a deadlock. The Opposition parties somehow felt that the elections did not adequately represent the will of the people. They asked for new elections. They also believed that the Communists ought to get out of the Interior and Justice Ministries—a proposal which, if put into effect, would have terminated the agreeable arrangement whereby Communist police arrested political opponents and then Communist judges pronounced the prisoners guilty.

Vishinsky considered the Opposition demands altogether unreasonable. Executing a trick play, the cabinet resigned, and then reorganized itself with some new names but the same party line-up. That was as far as the Moscow Agreement got in Bulgaria.

The Fatherland Front Government which now settled down for a year of unimpeded operations on the face of Bulgaria had the same dubious outline as the contemporary National Democratic Front Government in Rumania. Splinter groups headed by renegades from the Opposition groups filled the gaps made by the authentic parties forced out of the coalition. An ex-writer of pro-German pamphlets became Information Minister. A reformed Macedonian terrorist took over Foreign Affairs.

Prime Minister Kimon Georgiev, like Rumania's Petru Groza, furnished the façade of respectability for the puppet regime. He and General Damian Veltchev, the War Minister, belonged to the *Zveno*. These two gave the cabinet tone. They had been personally responsible for the three *coups d'état* in modern Bulgarian history. Sturdy patriots both, and congenital antagonists of the Communists, their presence in high places seemed to guarantee that the Bulgarian Government, despite all other evidence, was resolutely independent.

It took *Zveno* a long time to realize that it was a prisoner of the Communists, not a partner. Even after he was tossed out in the 1945 cabinet reshuffle, Petko Stainov, *Zveno* foreign minister of the first government under Soviet occupation, lectured me on the unthinkable of Bulgaria ever going Communist. "The Communists

are a temporary phenomenon," said he. As for the Russians, "You," he counseled (meaning the U. S. and Britain), "must try to be patient with them; you must allow for their peculiar mentality and peculiar suspicions; you must make concessions and win their confidence."

So Stainov went on making compromises and gentle expostulations—until, his usefulness over, he was being denounced in daily Communist editorials as a "dirty fascist."

General Veltchev was less starry-eyed about prospects of getting along with the Communists when I said good-bye to him in May, 1946. The Russians were already undermining him by packing the Bulgarian Army with Moscow-trained political commissars. But he too declined, grimly, to utter a word of protest, even off the record. He sat there as straight-backed as his high straight-backed chair, that swarthy, iron-jawed, dour arch-conspirator in the slate-colored, unbemedaled uniform of a colonel general, and all that he would reveal of his foreboding was to mutter that Bulgaria must and would remain independent. But Veltchev had too formidable a repete and too dangerous a hold on the Army's allegiance for the Communists to tolerate him much longer.

A little while later, by government decree, the Army was removed from the War Ministry's jurisdiction and placed directly under the orders of the full cabinet. A continuous purge of the higher ranks got rid of more than 2,500 officers. Veltchev was gradually surrounded by a staff of Communist generals trained in Moscow political academies. His name became increasingly linked in the Government press with various alleged conspiracies against the regime, and even with Drazha Mihailovitch, the villain of the Yugoslav piece. After some months of this, during the last weeks of which he lived under house-arrest, he was induced to resign as War Minister and accept a somewhat less glamorous post—Minister to Switzerland! One of the final arguments used to persuade him was delivery to him of the body of Colonel Boris Zlatev, his personal aide-de-camp. Zlatev's head was crushed in like an eggshell. An official announcement said: "Suicide by poisoning."

Prime Minister Georgiev needed no such robust handling. Unlike Veltchev, he was a docile tool, taking the bulk of the *Zveno* group along with him in one ruinous concession to the Communists after another. Georgiev and *Zveno* got their proper reward in a second Bulgarian election, run off in October, 1946. This time the Communists were pleased to permit all their friends in the Fatherland

Front to campaign on separate tickets. *Zveno* got less than 2 per cent of the votes, as against 53 per cent for the Communists.

The 1946 election gave the public insignia and appurtenances of power to a man who had been the real ruler of Bulgaria ever since the Soviet arrival two years earlier. This was Georgi Dimitrov, no kin to the Agrarian leader of the same name but the internationally-publicized ex-secretary of the Communist International, senior even to Tito in the Balkan hierarchy, star defendant at the 1933 Reichstag Trial, where he had confounded the mighty Hermann Goering from the witness box.

For a full year after the Sofia *coup d'état*, Dimitrov had managed Bulgaria from Moscow, daily telegraphing long instructions, exhortations and denunciations which the Communist press published in full. Now he was in Sofia himself, a one-man government though he held no public office, his position at the top of the Workers' Party (as the Communists called themselves in Bulgaria) being sufficient to make his word much more important than law.

In the fight against "the infernal schemings of the reaction," Dimitrov announced soon after reaching Sofia, "There can be no generosity, no self-control." When the 1946 electoral campaign got under way, that was just about the spirit in which the regime conducted itself.

This time there was no boycott, because the Opposition had determined to stand its ground and get some kind of representation in Parliament. The regime therefore went in swinging. Anyone who attempted to destroy the Fatherland Front's achievements, declared Traicho Kostov, Communist Vice-Premier, would "have his hands cut off." Some 30 Opposition candidates and 200 Opposition organizers were locked up. Twenty-six Opposition speakers were killed.

On Election Day, October 27th, Government supporters used multiple voting cards to facilitate their balloting in several different places. So many dead persons voted that the electoral lists were nicknamed "tomb-stone registers." The counting of the ballots in more than half of the districts was done without Opposition witnesses. In some cases this led to no Opposition votes being recorded at all.

Despite all this, the combined Agrarian-Socialist opposition managed to obtain 101 seats out of a total of 465 in the new Parliament. Considering the obstacles, this could safely be called a sensational victory.

But the Communists emerged victorious also: not over the anti-Government parties but over the fellow travelers and optimists in the Fatherland Front. The Communists won 278 seats, leaving 86 for the

other Front parties. Dimitrov became Prime Minister. With superb generosity, the Communists took only ten of the twenty places in the new cabinet and allowed old Georgiev to stay on as Foreign Minister (with Dimitrov as chairman of a Foreign Affairs Committee which out-ranked Georgiev as Foreign Minister).

The Communists could afford such gestures. A month earlier, the monarchy had been abolished by plebiscite and a "People's Republic" proclaimed. A Communist, Vasil Kolarov, longtime associate of Dimitrov in the Comintern, was its first President. And now an election, in which the satellite parties paid the price of their two-year failure to maintain their integrity, had given the Communists an absolute majority in Parliament—for the first time in Red Army Europe.

It remains now to see what this promised and bestowed upon the Bulgarian people.

OLD REFRAIN

In Plovdiv, just a few hours' drive from Sofia, I tried to buy a copy of *Zname*, newspaper of the Democratic Party. The newsdealer said sorry, all sold out. A little later I saw him hand a big bundle of that day's issue to a junk dealer. The newsdealer worked for *Strela*, an official agency which distributed all Bulgarian publications. *Strela* was managed by the Communists.

As in Rumania, the opposition papers suffered from frequent press-room strikes which closed them for weeks at a stretch. These strikes never had anything to do with crass things like wages or working conditions. They were purely political. The printers belonged to the Government-dominated ORPS, Bulgaria's AFL-CIO, and could be yanked out at will. Among other things, the printers' union passed a resolution that, because Communist leader Dimitrov had once been a pressman, they would never set any type which criticized him.

During the war the pro-Nazi Government had shut newspapers down for publishing false rumors. The new regime simply rubbed out the word "false." A new press law authorized suspension of any paper printing "views which tend to harm State interests." Opposition papers generally averaged about one day of suspension to every four days of publication. Their editors were frequently arrested and sometimes interned.

When a drop in the paper supply brought a cut in newsprint rationing, the Opposition press was the chief casualty. To parliamentary protests against such discrimination, the Information Minister quite truthfully replied: "The old idea of freedom to defend whatever political views one likes has suffered a great change."

By the Summer of 1947, the *new* idea of freedom in Bulgaria had sufficiently flowered to permit the suppression of all three Opposition newspapers.

Meanwhile, the Government kept up an unimpeded barrage of its own propaganda. Every evening my room at the Hotel Bulgaria near the Royal Palace in Sofia was brightened by orations thundering from a loudspeaker in the street. Each government department had its own propaganda section. All the daubers and plasterers in the country were working happily on portraits and busts of the bearded Marxist saints and their bemustached Soviet disciples. These gazed out heroically from every shop window and wall.

Parades were frequent and held at public expense. The government uprooted the lovely royal gardens in the center of Sofia and laid down a barren road through them so that the processions could pass by a long line of statues which had been built in sections and briskly assembled on the spot like automobiles. Cheering crowds were guaranteed, because the attendance of every factory worker and government clerk was checked off by his union. Membership in the union was not "compulsory"—but neither was it compulsory to wear shoes and clothing, for which ration tickets were unobtainable without a union card.

Physical persuasion took over where the gentler arts of propaganda fell short.

On an overnight journey I made with two American naval officers down the Bulgarian Danube from Ruschuk to Silistra, I carried on side-of-the-mouth conversations with passengers after following them to empty cabins or lonely corners of the ship. (The riverboat, of course, was called the *Georgi Dimitrov*, rechristened from the *Tsar Boris*.) Silistra was the grimmest town of all my Balkan wanderings. It was bright and picturesque enough, but the population talked in whispers. I've never seen a place more palpably covered over with terror. The only people I met there who seemed to be enjoying life were a half-dozen husky young men in riding boots who were having a loud time in the local tavern. They, the proprietor explained to us, belonged to the Militia, Bulgaria's political police.

This Militia had 35,000 members throughout the country. All of them were recruited by the Communists and were later required to belong to the Party. Central headquarters were located inside a gloomy building on Sofia's Lvov Most Square. Also in this edifice were the

offices of the Communist Party's Secret Service and of Soviet counter-espionage for the whole Balkans. All these bureaus had direct telephone lines with each other. The Militia therefore got plenty of expert advice.

Basic writ on which the Militia operated was the so-called "Law for Defense of the People's Power," which rendered the Bulgarian people powerless in defense of their civil liberties. The law was cribbed largely from a similar decree of the fascist period, rewritten and strengthened with "democratic" improvements. The new version throttled complaints by the simple procedure of branding them as treason. Anybody could be jailed for making remarks which were "offensive or incorrect and liable to create distrust in the Government," or "tend to harm good relations with a friendly State," or "impede economic life."

Under this law, the seventy-two-year-old Socialist Krustiu Pastuchov was condemned to five years in prison because he criticized a speech by the Comintern's Dimitrov and deplored Communist activities in the Army. Pastuchov's jail sentence was the Communist accolade for his long life spent in fighting reaction.

Perhaps the silliest indictment brought against anyone by the "People's Republic" was the charge that a Bulgarian physician employed by the U. S. Mission had spread "assertions of a nature to create distrust and confusion." These assertions, for which the physician received eighteen months in jail, were allegedly made when a picture of Premier Dimitrov came off a wall in a mountain hut which the doctor and a group of Americans were visiting. According to an official Bulgarian communiqué, the picture was removed by a U. S. Army colonel at the party, whose withdrawal from Bulgaria was therefore demanded by the Sofia government. According to the Colonel, "The picture fell due to the vibration of many people's dancing in the hut."

On the other hand, there was nothing amusing about the charges launched at Nikola Petkov, Agrarian leader, when he was arrested in June, 1947, a half-year after his party had won 86 per cent of the Opposition seats in the parliamentary elections. Accused of conspiring with "certain international elements" and domestic reactionaries to "establish a government contrary to Bulgaria's democratic interests," Petkov was deprived of his parliamentary immunity and jailed. A lynch court condemned him to death—in addition to consigning him to prison for 45 years on four minor counts, fining him a half-million leva, and taking away his citizenship. The Petkov Case, violating Yalta, the Bulgarian Armistice, and the guarantee of freedom expressly contained in the new peace treaty, served notice that the Dimitrov regime now

felt strong enough to dispense with even the fiction of a free, legally elected Opposition in Parliament.

To enforce the "Law for Defense of the People's Power," the Militia had the right to arrest without warrant, imprison without trial, even seize persons already acquitted by the regular courts. Questioning of suspects was conducted with all the brutality of a bad novel about the Nazis. A man I knew, whose crime had been that he had friends at the U. S. and British missions, was visited at the approved stroke of midnight by men armed with tommyguns. He was shoved into an automobile, blindfolded, driven around Sofia in circles, delivered to an unknown house and held for ten days in a room without windows, blindfolded daily for talks with Bulgarian and Russian interrogators, and blindfolded again when returned to his home. At that, he was lucky. Most people who received midnight visits simply disappeared. If a suspect got away before such visits, his relatives could be taken as hostages.

The best-known concentration camps were at Boshulia, Pernik, Sveti Vrach, Dupnitsa and Rositsa. Official circles smilingly called them "labor re-education camps." I almost got to see one of these progressive labor academies. At least, after much cajolery and compliments, I received permission from Information Minister Dimo Kasassov to appear at the gates of Rositsa at a certain hour of a certain day. The British Political Mission offered to lend me a car, with a First Secretary coming along to show me the sights of the Bulgarian countryside—which suggested that the Mission was eager to inspect the camp also. But before the appointed day, I ran afoul of none other than Kimon Georgiev, the then Prime Minister.

In an interview he gave me, Georgiev made some undiplomatically disagreeable remarks about the Turks, who live next door to the Bulgarians. He intimated that the Turks ought to cede a substantial piece of border territory to the Bulgarians. "Turkey's retention of Eastern Thrace, from which the Turks once expelled a large Bulgarian population, would be a handicap to Turk-Bulgar friendship," said Georgiev. When I read this back to him from my notes, in the presence of an official interpreter supplied by the Bulgarian Information Ministry, the Prime Minister confirmed it. But when I cabled it to London, and the Turkish press wrathfully picked it up, daring the Bulgarians in banner headlines to just try and take Eastern Thrace, Georgiev tumbled out of his trial balloon in alarm. He denied ever having said any such thing. He hastened to announce officially that "Bulgaria has no claims

whatsoever on Eastern Thrace"—the most forthright disclaimer Turkey had ever received on the matter from the Bulgarians.

This was orthodox Balkan diplomatic procedure. But Georgiev went further. To punish me for "misquoting" him, he canceled my scheduled trip to the Rositsa camp.

So I missed my chance to inspect that labor re-education institute where, according to reports from inside, some 3,000 political prisoners were toiling with pick and shovel twelve hours daily, seven days weekly. But I did have a look at certain Intelligence reports concerning conditions at Dupnitsa, where opponents of the regime, encouraged by torture and half-starvation, were doing rockpile work on a railroad through the wild Struma River gorge. Later, I passed through Dupnitsa myself on another kind of errand, and learned from a casual remark of local Fatherland Front members that fascists were getting what they deserved in that part of the country.

"Graduates" of the camps, if and when released, were patched up and then persuaded to sign affidavits that they had been lovingly treated. Nevertheless I was put in touch with enough survivors to establish the fact that Gestapo techniques were much admired by the camp faculties, with new refinements such as "the telephone conversation with Churchill" (holding an electrified receiver in each hand for fifteen minutes) or "the trip to New York" (squatting in a tub of cold water for three days). At least as terrifying as the physical maltreatment was the psychological cure applied to the students. This consisted in endless repetition of such slogans as "Long live the Fatherland Front—I am a contemptible fascist," chanted in compulsory unison or by individual performance, day after day, until not a few of the scholars went quite mad.

DOCTORS OF ECONOMY

One Agrarian politician—who would not relish reading his name here—was arrested and shoved into a windowless militia cellar just for talking to the peasants of his own village. In this pit he stumbled over a lice-covered merchant who had been down there for fifteen days without coming up for air or questioning. This scoundrel had declined to contribute half of his business capital to the Communists for "charity" purposes. Finally he paid up and was released. I went to see him. Terrified, he begged me to say that his contribution had been "voluntary."

By putting this kind of bee on small shopkeepers and large industrialists alike, the Party collected billions of leva for its private treasury. It extorted homes, factories, acres of farmlands. Communist agents

joined—without invitation—in company management. The former telephone operator at the Granitoita cement works became a member of its board of directors. "I don't know anything about building," an ex-chauffeur directing a construction firm admitted with a grin, "but I'm learning."

In addition to the burden of compulsory philanthropy, Bulgarian trade and industry were saddled by laws which brought business to a near standstill. Especially crippling was a decree for the "Confiscation of Illegally Acquired Property." Under it, a man had to prove that any possession acquired since 1935 had not been obtained through black marketing or by collaboration with the Germans. The burden of proof was on him. His employees, his neighbors, his children were required by law to inform against him. Magistrates were bound, under threat of dismissal, to begin proceedings against anybody accused by anybody else. In Gabrovo, the Pittsburgh of Bulgaria, some twenty-five industrialists were put in chains and displayed for three hours under a broiling sun before their cases were even heard.

This expropriation on bogus charges of profiteering was an indirect form of nationalization copied from the Yugoslav model. Open and avowed nationalization was less frequently attempted, and affected mainly the few industries of sufficiently large scale. In most cases, nationalization was hardly necessary, for owners of small factories were restricted to a low "salary," making them virtual civil servants without the benefits of such a status, while the rest of their income was diverted by a series of concealed expropriatory measures. A favorite device was for the State to move in and proclaim a monopoly. Thus Dimitrov one day notified the Bulgarian Merchants Association that the State would thereafter monopolize the hotel and restaurant business, and open large department stores (again on the Yugoslav pattern). He "invited" the tradesmen to abandon private enterprise and go to work for the government stores.

Bulgaria had escaped almost untouched from the ravages of war. A "People's Government" was announcing daily victories in its campaign to distribute to the people the benefits of their labor and the riches of their soil. Yet, somehow, life seemed to be getting harder instead of easier. The cost of living kept stubbornly rising, clothing was scarce, wages bought less day by day. With the average salary at about 6,000 leva monthly, the worker had to labor nearly two hours to earn the price of an egg, a week for two pounds of butter, two weeks for a pair of shoes and ten weeks for a suit of clothes. A wry joke among the

quiet little people was that Bulgaria had truly become a Garden of Eden, because everybody was now naked and eating apples.

As prices mounted, so mounted the wrath of the Government's economic doctors, until one day in March, 1947, they moved to cure the disease with a single large pill. The experts decided to remove the threat of inflation and to wipe out the black market by calling in the nation's money.

Therefore, on the morning of March 7th, a decree summoned all citizens to surrender all their cash within a week. In return the banks would give each depositor a maximum of 2,000 leva (about \$2—\$4 in actual purchasing power) in new banknotes freshly printed in Moscow—and hold the balance, including government bonds, in blocked accounts.

The public immediately interpreted this to mean that all cash and bank deposits thereafter would be practically worthless. People took all the funds they had in the house (the banks were forbidden to pay out from savings accounts) and rushed into the streets to buy whatever they could lay hands on. The half-million inhabitants of Sofia ran wild. For those who had substantial cash, one of the first targets was the furniture shops. Buyers grabbed two or three beds, mirrors, tables at a time, paying any amount asked. Prices jumped 100 per cent in the first hour. When the furniture shops were emptied, people with any money left moved on to the clothing stores, the drugstores, the bakeries, even the peanut venders in the streets. Faces were contorted with frenzy. Women tore at each other's hair in the fur and dress shops. One old peasant grandmother was seen sitting on a curbstone, holding two cakes in one hand and eating a third in the other, crying at the same time. She said she had been saving all her life, and now the money was no good, and there was nothing else to buy, so she had bought cakes and was eating them like a fool. Others bought coffins, though there was nobody to bury. One merchant announced he would give money to anybody who asked for it, which brought a swarm of gypsies upon him, each of whom received 2,000 leva. Within three hours the dollar rose from 1,000 to 10,000 leva, the gold napoleon from 15,000 to 150,000. In the afternoon, the Finance Ministry finally ordered all shops to close. In a last fling, crowds descended on the restaurants, eating till they were gorged; many bought tickets for a week's admissions to the movies and theaters. When it was all over, and there was nowhere else to turn, those who still had money staggered to the banks, paid it in and received 2,000 leva each in the new banknotes.

Why should there have been an inflation in Bulgaria at all? The country's resources and productivity had not been appreciably diminished by the war. Bulgaria suffered little of the damage which accounted for at least part of the inflation in Rumania and Hungary. The rising Bulgarian cost of living was caused by scarcity of goods. Why were goods suddenly scarce in Bulgaria?

No changes had occurred in the economic system except those induced by the Communists and Russians. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that the Communists and Russians may have been responsible for the turn for the worse.

In her economic relations with the USSR Bulgaria fared better than the other ex-Nazi countries in only one respect; not having invaded the Soviet Union, Bulgaria got no reparations bill from the Russians. In fact, she benefited in this regard as a protectorate of the Russians, who fought to reduce her Greek reparations to \$45,000,000 (which the Bulgarians did not hasten to pay) and who persuaded the Yugoslavs not to press for their \$25,000,000 in reparations from "brotherly" Bulgaria. But Bulgaria did get an Occupation army to feed and support, and, for a poor, non-industrial country, she paid plenty in loot and requisitions. It was in her "normal" trade relations with the USSR, however, that Bulgaria rendered up the steadiest and heaviest tribute. As one Sofia official summed it up for me: "In politics the Russians hail us as comrades and Slav brothers, but when it comes to business they never let us forget that we are 'ex-enemies.'"

All of Russia's Europe was honeycombed with bilateral barter-clearing agreements. Theoretically, these were supposed to exchange one satellite's surplus products for useful products which the USSR or other satellites could supply, without any money changing hands. In practice, the shipments from Russia, like the bartered opera glasses and other export junk of the Nazi Reich, were crammed with gadgets which weren't needed or weren't equal to value received. The barter agreements, furthermore, left the satellites without freedom to sell to the highest bidder in the best market.

Bulgaria's major contribution to this barter network was a series of trade pacts with the USSR, on terms and conditions so secret that only a half-dozen Sofia officials knew them. Under these agreements, Bulgarian shipments had to be, and were, on time; Soviet deliveries, when made, were half a year or more late, a trade unbalance that exerted a constant inflationary pull on the lev. And when the Russians did deliver, their shipments were spiked with second-hand loot from other countries.

Iron collected in Austria was dumped without regard for Bulgarian specifications. One hundred tons of Russian cigarette paper withered in Bulgarian warehouses because it was unfit for domestic consumption. (The Bulgarian cigarette paper supply had been exhausted by Red Army requisition.) At the end of a year's service, a fleet of Russian ZIS trucks lay in the auto graveyard. Fifty thousand Soviet tires either failed to fit the rims or else peeled off in chunks. A weird assortment of Russian chemicals and a shipment of shoe polish of "unanalyzable composition" proved unusable. The Russians delivered some badly needed cotton—but the quality was so bad it damaged Bulgarian textile machines, and the bulk of the finished cloth was snatched back by the Russians for army or home consumption. Attar of roses, a major perfume base that is sold to the U.S. at about \$1,500 per kilogram, went at \$385 to the Russians—who then undercut the Bulgarians in the American market. The Russians took 5,000 kilograms, Bulgaria's entire immobilized output for the war years.

Dobri Terpeshev, jolly chief of Bulgaria's Economic Planning Board, assessed his professional attainments as follows: "First I was a plow-boy, driving somebody's oxen, and that was the beginning of my formal education. Then I worked a piece of land, on which I learned agriculture. Later I opened a grocery, and specialized in commercial studies. Finally, I operated a small soda-and-lemonade plant, where I mastered the problems of industry and general economy."

So we see that, despite her friendship with Russia and the unchallengeable anti-Nazism of her democratic leaders, Bulgaria fared no better than Rumania, where fascism was a real menace. Politically, in fact, Bulgaria was treated worse. In Rumania, popular young King Michael had been allowed to retain his crown; the Government was a coalition of six parties, with a non-Communist Prime Minister. But in Bulgaria equally popular little King Simeon, eight years old, was denounced as a fascist and kicked off his nursery throne; the Communists wangled an absolute majority out of the elections, and the Prime Minister was Georgi Dimitrov, autocrat from the Kremlin.

The record in Bulgaria and Rumania made hash of the Communists' argument that they were suppressing democracy only to protect it against the enemies of democracy. The Moscow promise of pie-in-the-sky freedom—if and when the surviving "fascists" were exterminated—was really a device for smothering foreign complaints while legitimate non-Communist forces in every country were crushed. The evidence indicated that the true aim was total dominion, physical and spiritual, as quickly as possible.

The alarming thing to remember was that the Communists and their Russian masters made more progress faster in Bulgaria precisely because Bulgaria felt sentimental about Mother Russia and had a strong liberal element which trusted in Moscow's pledges.

10

Czechoslovakia: White Sheep

Truck convoys loaded with cheese from Holland, fish from Norway, rumbled across Prague's Vaclavske Namesti. There were traffic lights and even traffic. Downtown in the Czech capital looked like Chicago, Cleveland or London. Neatly dressed crowds hurrying in all directions, apparently intent and purposeful. Shop windows sleek with elegant native and foreign wares. Like an old friend long missed and marvelously returned, the *New York Times* on the newsstands, stacked calmly next to the *Paris Herald-Tribune*, the *Manchester Guardian*, *Time*, *Picture Post*, *France-Soir* as if all these were the most natural things in the world instead of sheer miracles. No parades, no slogans on the walls, no red stars, no uniforms even, except for policemen politely walking their beat. A great city of Western Europe, vibrating with the hum of commerce and freedom.

I had been led to expect a different sort of Prague. Where I had come from there was not only a curtain between East and West but a curtain between each country and its close neighbors. One scarcely knew what was going on beyond the nearest frontier. The little that trickled in about Czechoslovakia suggested another "people's democracy," one more chip off the old Russian bloc: abroad, "amens" to Molotov at every international meeting; at home, a Communist Prime Minister, a Communist Interior Minister, secret police, nationalized economy, controlled press. They said the Army was Communist too, led by the officers who had fought on the Eastern Front, the other chaps kicked out, the ones from England, Italy, the Middle East. In all, another chapter in the same lugubrious story.

I couldn't quite believe it. Years before, I had known the Czechs. I remembered their fine democracy. Still, there was the example of what had happened to the not inconsiderable number of democrats in Bulgaria. I determined to find out for myself.

Well, it wasn't so at all. A Communist named Clement Gottwald might be Premier, but a democrat named Eduard Benes was President,

and he was still the biggest man in the country. A hearty fellow named Jan Masaryk, half-American son of Thomas G. Masaryk, the "Father of Czechoslovakia," was still Foreign Minister. The Czechs still had a Parliament, which operated like a Parliament and not like a talking machine. You could see that the minute you walked into the neat-as-a-pinch Chamber, once the Stock Exchange, now redecorated in brown and lavender tones, with long polished desks where the deputies sat, three to a desk like solemn schoolboys, in sober gray and black morning coats. This was a working legislature, dignified and productive. In it the Communists were the strongest single party since the May, 1946, elections. But they only had 38 per cent of the seats. With the Social-Democrats, they held a parliamentary majority, but only of two votes—and the Social-Democrats, no copy of their servile counterpart across the line in Hungary, were an independent group not likely to stand for dictation.

Though the watchword in Czechoslovakia was nationalization, it was not anything the Communists were forcing down the country's throat. It was a considered policy on which all parties had agreed without compulsion. The Kosice Pact, made behind the Russian lines at the Slovak town of Kosice in April, 1945, just before Prague's liberation, had laid down the rules, and all parties were now making good by backing the program. It called for State ownership—after proper compensation—of most banks, mines, insurance companies and industrial establishments with a minimum number of workers ranging from three hundred up. Nationalization of about 55 per cent of industry and 60 per cent of the industrial workers was moving along at a fair speed. And the Communist plurality in Parliament, like nationalization, was a free choice of the Czechoslovak people, not an electoral bamboozle accomplished with secret police and foreign intervention.

The Communists, to be sure, had enjoyed certain pre-election advantages and employed a variety of pre-election tricks. They wouldn't have been normal Communists if they had done otherwise.

The leaders of the other parties had been in concentration camps or dead or in exile in Britain and the United States when the Red Army burst into the Czech territories; the Communist chiefs, however, had been with the Russians or in close communication with them. The Czech National Socialists, old moderate democratic party of Benes, were unable even to scrape a political committee together until two months after the Prague revolution against the Germans in May, 1945. The Communists naturally used their initial advantage with vigor.

Underground work throughout the war had given them control of

the trade unions. They had taken the lead in the majority of the "national committees" which sprang up everywhere in liberated territory. Communists had the corner on newsprint and publishing equipment for propaganda purposes; their flying squads had reached the premises of the old newspapers first and confiscated them on charges of having printed agreeable things for the Nazis during the war. Theoretically, each of the four coalition parties had parity in newspapers now: one paper per party. In fact, the Communists had three: their own, the trade-union organ, and the newspaper of a Communist-managed national youth organization.

The elections, however, had been unimpeachably democratic. This was the opinion of all observers, foreign and domestic, including anti-Communists. There had been rival parades, but no violence. Everything had gone off in apple-pie manner, except for minor disturbances in Slovakia. The sturdy Czech temperament, fortified this time by the great gravity of the occasion, had discouraged all possible monkey-shines. "There wasn't a single stretcher-case in the whole of Bohemia-Moravia," as Jan Masaryk put it. "Oh, a few black eyes maybe, but nothing like my student days, when we always banged up against the German lads and everybody got his teeth knocked out."

GEOGRAPHY LESSON

The strange but fundamental reason why the Communists got more votes than any other party was the hatred the Czechs felt, and would always feel, for the Germans.

From President Benes, habitually a mild man, on down, the nation was determined to get rid of the German minority. It didn't matter that Czechoslovakia's labor productivity was 30 per cent below pre-war level; nor that exile of the German population would cut the nation's working manpower by 25 per cent; nor that loss of German artisans would irreparably damage a rich trade in glassware and other luxury exports. The Sudetenland must be purged clean of Germans, not just Nazis. No more "fifth columns." (Also, for similar reasons, no more Hungarians, which accounted for the deportation drive against the Magyar minority in Slovakia, despite the bitter resistance of even the Communists in the Hungarian government.)

No Czech believed that the Germans in Germany were crushed. In twenty years, or thirty years, the Germans would try again. This was a basic Czech conviction. "The only safe German is a dead German," the Czech people said, and knew there were too many Germans still alive for heads to rest easy on Czech pillows.

Geography gave the Czechs, they felt, a single choice. Czechoslo-

vakia lay between Germany and Russia. Therefore Czechoslovakia must be Russia's ally, and Russia must be Czechoslovakia's protector. The Western Powers had been tested at Munich. They had failed. The German threat remained. Russia was the only possible defense.

In addition, the Red Army had ultimately departed from the country on a fixed evacuation date by agreement with the Czechoslovak Government. "The Russians could have overwhelmed us and remained," Czechs would point out. "They didn't. They left as promised. They can be trusted. We have nothing to fear from them."

The Russophile sentiments of the Czech masses was so strong that not even the cession of Ruthenia to the Soviet Union could shake it. Ruthenia, easternmost province of 1919 Czechoslovakia, was given to the Russians in free gift with scarcely a ripple of adverse public reaction. Later, other gifts were exchanged. Incredible, but true, the Russians actually gave the Czechs a great Nazi-built synthetic-gasoline plant, which the grateful Czechs named the Stalin Works. The Russians also made the Czechs a "gift" of former German-owned industries in the Sudetenland. In turn, the Czechs offered famed Karlsbad, with its curative waters, splendid gardens and regal hotels, as the resort and rest camp de luxe for officers of the Red Army in Europe.

Reliance on the Russians against the perpetual German menace, and gratitude to the Russians for liberation from the Germans, made an anti-Russian policy unthinkable.

That was why the entire Czech press, even the organ of the right-wing People's Party, was resoundingly pro-Russian on foreign policy. There was no censorship of the press, but none was necessary to keep all discussions of world affairs favorable to the Kremlin view. Political leaders and editors knew that an anti-Soviet position would lose them votes and readers.

By the same token, the Communists had gained enormous electoral advantage from their identification with the Russians. True, the Czech Communists had also shown more vitality and talked more convincingly than their disorganized competitors. But the important thing had been that the Communists were known to be deepest in Russian confidence. Soviet prestige had given the Communists their big vote. Many of those voting for the Communists, in fact, had felt they were voting for the Russians, and not at all for Communists or Communism. None of this meant, however, that the Czechs wanted a Soviet form of government, any sort of Communist bossing, or a rift with the West.

Czech passion for the Russians was at least equaled by their passion for democracy. This democracy was a Western one, not one of those new democracies of curious definition lately much talked about in Eastern Europe, but an old-fashioned democracy tending toward Jefferson rather than Marx. The Czechs wanted economic and social reform and everything else that was good, but they wanted it by majority decision, with ample regard for the rights of the minority.

So, while it was not possible to be anti-Russian, it was very possible to be pro-Allied, and call the Communists to account for being anti-Allied. On matters of pure sentiment—that is, when a specific Russian-Allied issue was not involved—the non-Communist press had no reluctance at all to show contempt for Party-line shibboleths. This was clearest in matters involving UNRRA. "It is interesting to note," said the provincial *Nove Slovo*, "how party politics can influence some people to an incredible degree of bias. They discredit the real, effective help which UNRRA renders only because it comes from the West. They only look to the East. Those who can see not only the friendly East but the friendly West are being denounced as reactionaries, enemies, and God knows what."

Nor did the Czechs' esteem for Russia warp their business judgment. A non-Communist was Minister of Foreign Trade. He operated on a business basis rather than by Kremlin rulebook. Germany had been eliminated as the production center of Middle Europe. The Czechs aimed to inherit as big a chunk as possible of Germany's foreign markets. They couldn't get it by hitching up to the Soviet economy, whose living standards were abysmally below their own. They needed a worldwide field to roam in.

So Prague's handsome hotels Alcron and Ambassador swarmed with Western buyers to whom the Czechs cheerfully diverted large quantities of linens, hops, gloves, precision tools, semi-precious stones, cut glass, costume jewelry. Czech trade missions ranged far and wide beyond the confines of Russia's Europe. To the U. S. they offered shoes, toys, textiles and other specialties for dollars with which to obtain American machinery and raw materials. They bought heavily from Switzerland, a country marked "fascist" on the Soviet ledger. When they made a deal with Turkey on tobacco, they signed for \$32,000,000 worth. Britain, Sweden, France, Denmark—the Czechs traded with them all, unhampered by dogma.

MIRACLE OF MOSCOW

Why were the Russians allowing Czechoslovakia to continue along this middle channel between totalitarian East and democratic West?

Of all the countries in the Soviet sphere, Czechoslovakia alone was being permitted to manage her own domestic affairs and maintain business as usual, or better than usual, with "reactionary capitalism" abroad. How long would Moscow stand for it?

Non-Communist Czech leaders thought Moscow would stand for it a long time. They counted on Soviet awareness that Czechoslovakia, dependable as an ally, could do Russia no harm by being democratic and maybe some good by being prosperous. Concurrence in this view had come from no less an authority than Joseph Stalin himself.

En route from London to a triumphal landing on liberated Czechoslovak soil, President Benes had made a wide detour—to put it mildly—and stopped off in Moscow first, to thank Stalin for the gallant services of the Red Army and to preview his reborn country's future. A conversation took place which ran approximately as follows:

"Mr. Stalin," Benes had said, "I have confidence in the government of the USSR. We have signed an agreement for non-intervention in domestic affairs, and I know you will keep it. But I am worried about our Communists."

"Do you think I should speak to them?" Stalin asked.

"No," replied Benes, "that would be an intervention in our domestic affairs. I can only tell you there is no party in Czechoslovakia which could be used against the Soviet Union. Our Communists have no need to fear that any party ever will. We shall remain your friends, because we know that if we don't we shall be destroyed by Germany."

"But we want to go our own way, building Socialism according to our own conception of it. A free Czechoslovakia will be a united Czechoslovakia, more reliable for your security than a Communist Czechoslovakia."

"Mr. President," said Stalin, "I agree with you completely. Please believe that we have no intention of interfering. We respect your complete independence. I agree with you also about the Communists. We shall not ask them to commit any stupidities."

In the test, nobody took greater account of the Czechs' democratic sensibilities than the Czech Communists themselves. On entering the 1946 elections campaign, they shed all vestiges of Marxism overnight. They stopped singing the Internationale. They put away the red flags and the pictures of Stalin, to march with portraits of Benes and old Masaryk. They rewrote their customary appeal to the workers, and broadened it to include farmers, merchants, intellectuals. They even demanded stronger political and economic ties with the West.

After their victory,* they went on performing like fervent apostles of the nation's democratic tradition. At an interview Benes gave me in the Hradcany Castle, he told me how he had made it unmistakably clear to the Communists that he was not a Communist and would never become one. "Yet," he said, "it was the Communists who proposed that my election to the Presidency be unanimous." I attended the inauguration in the great Hall of Vladislav—and the eyes of the Communist deputies were as moist as any other when Benes took his oath to lead the resurrected State along the path of democratic rectitude.

This was novel behavior for Communists, so novel that I needed to hear it reaffirmed with my own ears by a high and responsible Communist spokesman. He was Rudolf Slansky, red-haired and bushy-browed young Secretary General of the Party, with the usual record of wartime refuge in Moscow, topped off by a spell as Partisan leader in Slovakia.

Party headquarters were at the former German Bank. The only familiar sight, apart from the inevitable red flags, wall placards and portraits of Stalin, was the five muscular youths who sat at a table commanding the entrance to the building and checked the credentials of all persons arriving and departing. Down to their unsmiling faces and surly attitude, they were a nearly photographic reproduction of all the Communist strong-arm guards at every headquarters in every one of the countries I had lately visited farther east. (It was the only place in Prague where I found any guard at all, except in the Presidential Palace, which had one policeman in the courtyard.)

But Slansky himself answered all my questions in the tone and language of a prewar liberal socialist.

"Yes," he said, "we want to develop friendliest relations with the Anglo-Saxon Powers, politically as well as economically." Are there any reactionaries in the non-Communist parties, I asked. "The ma-

* The Communists' victory was sensational in the specifically Czech territories, the western half of Czechoslovakia, where they took 41 per cent of the votes, against three other major parties. But in the eastern, Slovak half, they received 30 per cent, against only one other major party—a sensational defeat. Unlike the Czechs, the Slovaks were bitterly anti-Soviet. This was partly due to traditional Slovak nationalism: their pro-fascist leaders in 1939 had torpedoed the Czechoslovak Republic for the sake of an "independent" Slovakia under Nazi protection. But another important reason for the strong anti-Communist vote in Slovakia was the behavior of the Red Army. Russian troops reached Slovakia much earlier than the Czech lands to the west, and behaved much worse.

jority of the leadership and mass support in the other parties is democratic," Slansky replied. I inquired if this meant that some of the leaders were reactionary. "Well, a few fascists tried to exert influence during the elections," he said, "but they were defeated." So there were no fascists in the present leadership? I continued. "No," he said.

And what kind of regime did the Communists desire for Czechoslovakia? Here Slansky used the familiar phrase "people's democracy" as his party's ideal—but conceded that it was already in existence under the present Government. I pressed him on this. I wanted to get a clear statement from him for my record, against the day when the Czechoslovak Communists might turn turtle and suddenly discover that their non-Communist associates in the coalition Government were reactionary. Did Slansky find any fault with the kind of democracy defined and practiced by the present regime? "No," he said firmly, "the Czechoslovak definition of democracy is our definition too. Even if we Communists obtained a clear majority in Parliament, we would stick to the agreement all the parties made at Kosice, and not go beyond it."

DEMOCRATIC HAT, COMMUNIST RABBIT

Non-Communist leaders felt confident that Czechoslovakia would not go Communist, not because of assurances like those I had received from Slansky, but because the Communists would never get 51 per cent of the popular vote.

The Communists, I was in fact assured, would never again even duplicate their 38 per cent received in the 1946 elections. They had reached that high-water mark in popular esteem because they had made the most attractive promises and had profited from the first glow of national gratitude to the Russian liberators. But now they were in power—which meant responsibility. And responsibility would bring blame for inevitable failure to make good on campaign promises.

This failure was all the more certain because the Communists had assumed power at the beginning of a new and difficult period. The post-Liberation flurry of debonair reforms was over. From now on, the reforms would have to be made to work; income would have to balance outgo; the people would have to dig in and sacrifice. This would require heavier taxes, smaller expenditures, businesslike legislation. For all of this the Communists—paying the usual price of responsibility in a democracy—would be held to account. They were sure to lose some of their popularity. Meanwhile, a new Constitution

had to be written within not more than two years, and new parliamentary elections held within the same time. No, the Communists in the next Parliament could hardly hope to hold their present gains, let alone improve their position.

So, at least, Czech politicians told themselves in quiet moments when musing over the prospects of Czech democracy in the Russian shadow. And if any of them ever entertained the thought that the Communists might nevertheless some day win an absolute majority in Parliament, they were comforted by the belief that the people and the Constitution possessed enough democratic safeguards to keep the Communists' ardor in check.

Superficially the observable facts did confirm that the Communists were being as cautious and sober as their opponents thought them. Still, I found it impossible to believe that Communist devotion to democratic forms was going to last a minute longer than necessary. By the time I arrived in Czechoslovakia I had seen too many Communists in other places.

I suppose I was prejudiced, if prejudice is something which keeps one from rushing to accept as real a phenomenon which contradicts all one's previous experience. For me, the democratic face worn by the Communists of Czechoslovakia was merely a tactical mask, put on for the suitable occasion and likely to be wiped off at the first favorable opportunity. This was the way Communists generally behaved. Knowing the unity of purpose which governed them everywhere, what compelling reason was there to think that Czech Communists were different?

The Communists knew that the Czech people would judge them in the next elections on performance, not on doctrine. So the year 1946-47 saw them tackling economic reconstruction with characteristic energy.

It was up to them to prove that living standards in a partially-nationalized economy could match those under unimpeded private enterprise. Czechoslovak prices were nearly as high as American, but wages averaged only 20 cents an hour. The problem was to eliminate this differential.

To solve it, the government drafted and put into effect an ambitious Two-Year Plan for heroic production increases in coal, steel, pig iron, electric power, railway locomotives and other industrial essentials, as well as in the whole range of agriculture. The plan was sponsored by the four-party coalition, but it was the primary responsibility of

the Communists who headed the coalition, and it was they who provided its driving force.

Vigorous action was not unjustified, considering the urgency of the economic crisis and the size of the national stake in its solution. But the Communists' innate yearning to have things precisely their own way led them imperceptibly into maneuvers more and more dubious. These were tentative and careful. Czechoslovakia was still in a transitional stage. The Czechs couldn't be pushed around as obviously as the peoples with less political maturity farther east. All that one could see on the surface was more and more exposure of the Communists' fondness, like their brethren abroad, for broken pledges and demagoguery.

Thus, as the Party became accustomed to its leading position in the Government, it tended to operate on its own hook and apart from that Government. The "factory committees" in each plant, which presumably were concerned only with betterment of working conditions, meddled increasingly with general production policy, at the expense of efficient operation. Nationalization began to betray the usual weaknesses of political management, with experienced directors forced out and party stooges put in their places. Despite their repeated promises to the contrary, the Communists angled for further nationalization beyond the inter-party agreement. Although the agreement—and the law—banned nationalization of plants below a certain size, a Communist tendency developed to lump various small factories together and nationalize them as a unit.

One day the Communist-controlled "Revolutionary Trade Union" federation came out blandly for nationalized department stores. On another day a Communist spokesman hinted that nationalization ought to sweep in all wholesale and major retail trade. Communist ministers betrayed an ominous penchant for appealing to the "people's masses" on measures opposed in Parliament. Mysterious strikes would be threatened by unions unless such and such an industrial establishment were nationalized. Since these unions all took their orders from the Communists, their motivation and tactics were clear.

The fate of Czech democracy, however, was not going to be decided by the maneuvers of the Communist Party in Czechoslovakia. Left alone—and allowed to keep their economic ties with the West—the Czech people could have been trusted more than any other in eastern Europe to resist and repulse any local Communist threat to their freedom. The real threat came from Russia.

If preservation of Czech democracy had been only an internal problem, the line to be taken by the Western democracies for its defense would have been obvious. The crux of the matter was economic. It would have been up to the West—especially the U. S.—to build up the staying power of the Czech people by open-handed economic support.

The Czechs were experimenting to see if a semi-controlled economy could exist simultaneously with civil liberties. The Two-Year Plan, though predominantly a Communist project, was something which the Czechs wanted to see succeed. For its success, they needed credits, machines and supplies from the West. Such help would not necessarily guarantee success. But if the Plan failed despite Western co-operation, the Czechs would know where to place the fault. The blame would go, not to the democracies, but to the Communists who had managed the Plan. Communist prestige was too closely bound up with the Plan to escape serious decline if it failed.

But if the democracies did not help, and the Plan failed, the Communists could charge that Czechoslovakia had been sabotaged by Western capitalist enmity. From such a crisis the Communists could emerge stronger than ever—and the Czechs, disillusioned by economic distress, might turn full face to their Soviet neighbor, surrendering their freedoms for the illusory promise of bread.

Considered in this light, Czechoslovakia seemed to be one corner of Russia's Europe where the West could still pursue an effective policy. Elsewhere, we had made the mistake of being passive, of leaving everything to Soviet good faith. Here, however, we ran a risk of making the opposite mistake—of being too aggressive, of hastily finding Czechoslovakia guilty of bad faith and prematurely writing her off as a loss. Wouldn't such a policy—as illustrated by the State Department's cancellation of a projected loan to Prague—have the same result as our earlier policy in the Balkans: defeat by default?

It would—and if the only element in the equation were the Czech people themselves, such a policy on our part would have been a monumental boner. But the equation was not so simple. That Czechoslovakia was no free agent was crudely demonstrated by the tragi-farcical somersault executed in Prague on the occasion of the Anglo-French bid for Czech collaboration in the Marshall "Aid-Europe" Plan. First the Czechs said yes, eagerly and instinctively, when they had only themselves to consult—but then the Premier and the Foreign Minister were called to Moscow, and later trooped sadly to the Kremlin's long-distance telephone to tell Prague no.

The hard reality was that the West no longer held the initiative in even this neighboring, traditionally friendly corner of Russia's Europe. It no longer mattered how true and steadfast was the Czech dedication to liberty. The Soviets would retain the fiction of benevolent neutrality toward internal Czech affairs only as long as it suited. Russia was too close, too ponderous for the Czechs to be able to resist her. In the divided world which Kremlin policymakers seemed intent on having, there was no place for a free Czechoslovakia in a valiant middle ground.

11

The Case Against the Russians

I kept missing Poland during my shuttle trips back and forth across Middle Europe, and Finland was always too remote. Apart from these two countries, however, I had ample opportunity to observe the Russians at their labors in all the countries under Soviet occupation or influence. Oddly enough, my notes on Russian behavior began in the unlikely harbor of Port Said, at the northern end of the Suez Canal. They ended with a bit of adventure in the Soviet zone of occupied Austria. In between lay some eighteen months of unpleasant meditation.

The Port Said experience was not so much an adventure as a surprise. I got it aboard the S.S. *Moreton Bay*. This was a ship on its way from Odessa to England with 1,700 American and British troops. The troops were ex-prisoners of war, freed from Nazi internment camps in Poland and eastern Germany by the advancing Red Army. I scrambled up the gangplank to the open decks, expecting a batch of bright human-interest pieces for *PM* about the gallant way our men had been rescued. Instead, I was set back by a hot blast of mass emotion against the Russians, from dislike to contempt to plain hate. We were the first newsmen the men had seen. They were bitterly eager to talk about the "dirty," "verminous," "barbaric" Russians; Russians who wouldn't give them food, who let them stagger hundreds of miles to the rear on foot, who told them that any soldier allowing himself to be captured instead of dying in battle ought to be shot as a traitor. The stories got so bad that halfway through our visit the ship's public-address system barked: "Correspondents will refrain from further interrogation of United States personnel."

We continued to talk to the British troops, but censorship later choked off copy about them too. Now it happened that I was also writing for a Canadian paper, and there were twenty-seven Canadian soldiers aboard. For some occult reason, it was permissible to report on them freely. I didn't know whether I wanted to. It was clear that

the men must have had a pretty rough time with the Russians; the whole ship couldn't have conspired to hand out a prefabricated story. But that didn't make it any the less upsetting and unbelievable. Besides, the war was still on. What a jolt such a story could give morale back home. I found an unheroic way out when I came across two Canadians, among the twenty-seven, who said they had no complaints. I still don't know if I was right or wrong, but I cabled only what those two told me about the Russians, and uneasily censored the rest out myself. Next day the *Toronto Star* announced in big type: CANADIANS SAVED, FED BY RUSSIANS.

By the time I had my last personal encounter with the Russians, six Soviet territories later, I was somewhat drier behind the ears.

To proceed from Vienna to Linz, first town in the American zone of Austria, one had to drive for three or four hours through Soviet-occupied country. Equipped with a Russian permit, I set out late one morning in an American Jewish relief ambulance (JDC), lent to me because I intended to inspect some displaced-person camps in the American sector. After a while, the driver and I got hungry. I foraged in the back of the ambulance and found plenty of cans of food, but no can-opener. Well, I suggested brightly, let's stop at the next town, get these things opened, and have some beer too.

So we rolled off the road at a place called St. Pölten. Our tinned meat soon began sizzling in a restaurant kitchen and we were seated at a table with our mouths open for the first gulp of *lager* when a hand gripped my shoulder.

"*Nick essen*," said a Russian sergeant towering above me.

I attempted some explanations.

"*Essen verboten*," he interrupted. "*Russisch Zone*."

We left the beer on the table and the tins in the pot and climbed back into the ambulance. As the motor turned over, the sergeant reappeared, on the runningboard.

"*Kommandatura*," he said.

I protested that he had already deprived two hungry men of their lunch, we were on our way, what more did he want?

"*Essen verboten*," he chanted. "*Russisch Zone. Kommandatura*."

Around his shoulder was slung an eloquent tommygun.

At the *Kommandatura*, the sergeant told a long story to a captain in charge. As he listened, the latter stared at me balefully. His chin was black with stubble, and the collar of his shirt was nearly as black. In the corner of the office was a little mound of dog manure, neatly piled.

"You must return to Vienna," he said finally.

Vienna was two hours back, and I was expected in Linz. I showed him my Russian pass. He read it.

"This says you may drive through our zone. It does not say you may stop."

"But it was only for something to eat."

"You are not allowed to stop. You are authorized only to drive through. You must go back."

But there was more to come. Waiting at the ambulance were two Russian privates, both with tommyguns. When I climbed into the caboose, they climbed in at the back. I turned to the captain.

"Don't you trust me to reach Vienna without a guard?" I asked. "Or do your men want to see the big city?"

For the first time, he looked startled.

"You are to report in Vienna to Soviet headquarters, for questioning," he said. "These soldiers will take you there."

About this time, over in Germany, two American officers had disappeared for several weeks in the Russian occupation zone. I kept thinking about them as we neared Vienna. I made up my mind an hour outside the city that I was going to try not to arrive at the *Kommandatura*.

This part of the road was heavily traveled by American personnel because of the U. S. airport at nearby Tulln. I muttered in pig German to the driver. He caught on quickly. After a few minutes, the motor began wheezing. We pulled up. The driver lifted the hood and deftly pocketed a spark plug. After that, we were really stuck.

Two American M.P.'s jeeped into sight. I flagged them down. If I had to go to the *Kommandatura*, I told them, I'd like some Americans to know about it. They volunteered to go along.

Meanwhile my two Russians were yelling at the driver and demanding that he fix the ambulance. The M.P.'s stopped four Americans passing in a weapons carrier. They agreed to tow us in. That made six armed Americans to two armed Russians, and I was beginning to feel much better.

There was an M.P. post at the Vienna city limits. By prearrangement, the weapons carrier halted in front of it. I told the Russians that I had to telephone my own commanding officer. The six G.I.'s, plus the two M.P.'s on duty at the post, gazed at the Russians quizzically while I put in my call.

Colonel Bill Yarborough, Provost Marshal, roared with rage when I told him the sad story. "Goddammit," he shouted. "They've got no

right to hold you. It's against the agreement. Every occupying power here that arrests another power's personnel is supposed to turn him right back to his own people. You stay where you are. Don't budge. I'll be right out. Have you got enough men?"

I looked through the window. By now there were ten Americans, counting two who had just arrived to relieve the guard at the post. The Colonel hung up. My Russians were getting fit to be tied. When I announced that I was going to wait, one of them went off his top. He screamed I was a spy, I was under arrest, and I'd better come quietly. Gently I demurred, and the ten Americans seemed to agree with me. The Russian glared around at us, one hand on the barrel of his gun. For a moment the situation promised to become vigorous. But, thinking better of it, he suddenly leaped into the road, stopped the first civilian car passing by, and roared away into Vienna, presumably for reinforcements. His comrade, who was less inclined to take matters seriously, accepted a stick of chewing gum.

Ten minutes later Colonel Yarborough drove up, followed by an International Patrol jeep—one British M.P., one American, one Frenchman and one Russian. These squads had recently been instituted by Yarborough to handle the numerous cases of clashes between members of the different occupation forces.

The Colonel told the Russian member he would sign a paper certifying that I had been delivered into American custody. This was regulation procedure for such cases. The Russian M.P., having conferred with my single surviving guard, declined. He said it was the regulation, all right, but my guard had orders to turn me over to the *Kommandatura*, so that was the way it would have to be. (Technically, the Russian M.P. was under the American Provost Marshal's orders, but this didn't seem to bother him.)

Yarborough swore softly, and we all drove back into town. But I didn't reach the *Kommandatura*. "Once you get in there, you may not get out," he advised me. "The *Russkis* keep picking our boys up every day, just for the hell of it. And you're a correspondent—extra bait. I'll go over myself. You wait in my office."

I did, for nearly an hour. It took all that time for the Colonel to find someone at the *Kommandatura* big enough to risk surrendering me. "This is the first time I've ever gone over there myself to bail someone out," he told me when he returned. "As soon as they saw me, they figured you must really be a first-class, Grade-A spy. The Captain in charge said he had no authority to release you. He sent me to his Colonel. The Colonel was scared stiff too. I went on 'up till I found a major general, Travnikov, the deputy-commander of Vienna. The Gen-

eral looked worried, but I talked him into it. So now you're my prisoner. If you plan to get to Linz tomorrow, for Pete's sake don't go by road again. Take the train. We've got a nice big one, for American troops only. The Russians may be waiting for you on the highway at St. Pölten, but they don't touch the train. And next time you come this way, carry a can-opener."

IVAN ON THE LOOSE

Generalization is a favorite refuge of the scoundrel. I won't say, therefore, that the behavior of the Russians in the above story is characteristic of all Russians. I'll only say it is characteristic of the two hundred or more Russians I met in the Balkans and Central Europe.

Some of them were quite agreeable, the few officers I bent elbows with at parties, or the occasional soldier away from his buddies and off duty. On such occasions, when the given Russian had no call to flex his muscles, he was likely to display a wholesome grin and a hearty cordiality. But these opportunities to learn about the Russians were rare, by Russian choice. Most of the time I was watching the Russian, he was acting up to his status of conqueror and head man. He was in charge of the show. He was sitting in the middle of a defeated country, with a big army behind him, and very feeble competition. An old Balkan proverb says: "If you want to know a man, give him power."

The Red Army's taste for violence was the first unfortunate trait noted by East Europeans and Westerners. In the chapter on Hungary, I have already had occasion to refer to the Russians' disposition toward murder. They also had a bias toward larceny, petty and grand.

Such operators were set an inspiring example by Red Army policy. Official looting reached a scale seemingly calculated to stock the whole Soviet Union. For months after the Russian arrival, the commonest sight in Central and Southeastern Europe was interminable convoys of freight cars, trucks and horse-drawn carts loaded with kitchen pots, toilet seats, lathes, presses, calipers, bathtubs, furniture, old clothing, microscopes. Even the military intelligence department worked on the project. Officers in charge of looting squads sometimes had ground plans of buildings, itemized lists of family treasures and their hiding places.

Private Russian looters proved themselves good sons of the Revolution in their total indifference to the concept of private property. It was more than indifference; it seemed rather like an utter ignorance of the idea. On the other hand, they let the Kremlin down badly in their failure to observe ideological distinctions between "fascist rulers" and

“democratic masses.” The mother of a proletarian ditch-digger was as likely a candidate for rape as the daughter of a reactionary aristocrat. The overcoat of an old-line local Communist, the mattress of some factory hand, were taken along with the limousines and Rembrandts of the fallen magnates.

The Russians went quite gaga over the gadgetry of Western civilization. In Budapest I watched three delighted infantrymen push round and round in a revolving door, then unscrew it, carry it halfway down the street, and wonder why it wouldn't work when they set it up in the road. The peasant soldiers were mad about bicycles. Clocks and watches too—especially wrist watches. The Russian word for watch (*tchassee*) became common coin in every language. The soldiers liked to wear all their wrist watches at once, flush up to the elbow.

They taught the word *davai* to the whole of occupied Europe. It meant give, cough up, fork over. The approved technique was to bark or growl it, with a wave of pistol or sub-machine gun. The latter became widely known as a *davai-guitar*. Stalin was universally honored as the *Davai Llama*. Popular bitterness grew so deep that even the huge war memorials in stone which the Russians profusely erected to their dead in every town were irreverently dubbed monuments to “The Unknown Watch-Stealer.”

Reports in the Allied press about the bad conduct of troops in China, France and Italy were waved before the noses of Allied personnel in eastern Europe who protested against Red Army violence. I had the honor of such a rebuttal direct from Matyas Rakosi, the Hungarian Communist, who complained that voters were blaming his party for the misbehavior of Russian soldiers. “Why,” he said, “all armies do that sort of thing. Even in Paris peaceful citizens stay off the streets after dark because Americans drunk on good French wine attack women and rob civilians. What if there are 100,000 Russians in Europe who are bandits! That's only one per cent of the ten million troops in the Red Army. Why should people be shocked because Russia has criminals too? The only difference is that the Russian gangsters don't have the scientific skill and up-to-date methods of your specialists in Chicago.”

Before leaving Europe, I tried to make a comparative check of troop behavior by visiting Allied zones in Austria and Germany.

A fair test was a place like Vienna, where four armies of occupation were on the same ground and the suffering local citizenry had equal opportunity to observe the habits of the different nationalities. I polled

fifty Viennese, at random. The ones living under Soviet jurisdiction told me the Russians were the worst of the four armies. So did the Viennese in the Allied zones of the Austrian capital, with the exception of three—who admitted belonging to the Communist party. Thirty-four said the French were second worst, with twelve votes going to the Americans for second place. The British had the best score: thirty-nine of my Viennese selected them as least obnoxious.

Russian soldiers were committing more crimes in Vienna than any of the other Allies. But this did not prove anything, because the Russians far outnumbered the rest. I put this problem to Headquarters. Using inter-Allied figures certified by the central command, they made me a special tabulation showing the ratio between major crimes in each army and the total number of misdemeanors committed by the *same* army over a six-month period. The bulk of Anglo-Franco-American mischief was drunkenness, burglary and beating of civilians. The Russian crime figures invariably revealed a higher proportion of more robust pursuits, such as rape and murder.

Later, two G.I.'s retraced their wartime odyssey from the French invasion coast through occupied Germany into Vienna. They wrote a book about it. They confirmed that the conduct of American troops was pretty awful. But when they got to Vienna and saw the Russians, they had to admit that "for the first time in the history of living man someone was behaving worse than the American soldier."*

WHAT MAKES IVAN RUN

As a point in their extenuation, it should be said the Russians were pretty hard on each other also. Theirs was truly a *nitchevo* attitude toward life, including the lives of Russians. In part, this may have accounted for the excesses committed by Red Army on non-Russian civilians, and for the indifference of the Soviet command. A Russian general who had sacrificed ten thousand men in a direct frontal attack on the Germans, when he might have cut his losses to a thousand by sending his troops around the objective, could not be expected to feel deep regret because Russians garrisoned on a Rumanian village slit the throats of a peasant family and stole all the pigs.

With this nonchalance about the value of human lives there seemed to go an indifference to human personality as well. Maybe this was an aspect of the fundamentally *Russian* attitude toward the unimportance of living or dying, a mood made familiar by the classic Russian novel. But there was reason to believe that the twenty-five years of peculiarly

* Bud Hutton and Andy Rooney, *Conqueror's Peace* (New York, 1947).

Soviet educational emphasis on collectivist virtues had helped to deaden the Red Army soldier's mind to the rights and values of individual men.

Deadened it certainly seemed to the astonished Europeans. They saw a "collectivist mentality" in every disagreeable thing the Russians did, in their habitual brutality toward everybody except children and animals, in their apathy, in the dull and sullen way they moved about the streets of the bourgeois cities, in their general inability to make friends with the local populations, in their bewilderment and suspicion at all the little signs of sophistication and individual taste which any Westernized community displays. Clannish, herdlike, the Russian seemed to the European to be a dismal combination of primitive Asiatic force and mass conformity. For the European, the Russian vanguard was decidedly no attractive advertisement of the collectivist society of the future.

Some of the lure of bourgeois civilization must have crept under the Russian skin, because Soviet propaganda worked hard to provide antidotes. Radio Moscow went all out against those Russians who, having joined the army and seen the world for the first time, had returned home to complain about the crudities of Soviet existence. A favorite propaganda poem, broadcast from Moscow to Red Army troops, was entitled "The Suckling Pig Went for a Trip Abroad." It appeared that the pig came back a complete hog, no different from foreign hogs, and so nauseating that it was too disgusting to describe.

Evidently, therefore, many Russians did gaze with wonder and joy upon the refinements of life disclosed to them by the Red Army's penetration of the West. But the people of occupied Europe rarely saw such phenomena. Instead they noted that Russian looters smashed whatever they couldn't take away, for the simple joy of smashing it or because they didn't understand its worth. Wooden kitchen chairs would be carried off exultantly as trophies of war, but vases, china, fine cut glass would be thrown through the closed windows. It was fun to slash paintings and shoot the eyes out of family portraits. Bonfires were also great sport, especially if they could be fed with rare tapestries and old books.

Perhaps the most shocking thing of all was the way Russian soldiers—and officers—lived in houses requisitioned from the civilian population. It would take a poet laureate of latrine-wall rhymesters to describe it adequately. Let us gloss it over by merely recording that the Russians showed an Olympian disdain for bourgeois plumbing.

The proper use of privies, however, was hardly important enough to serve as a proof of incompatibility between Russia and the West (provided that the Russians did not insist on marching farther westward to spread a culture in which toilets had no place).

One could also be philosophical about the average Red Army man's hunger for wrist watches, silk stockings, cameras, or his taste for vandalism. After all, the Soviet government had been busy building factories, dams and tanks to strengthen and protect the vulnerable young Communist society. There had been no time or facilities to produce the minor elegancies of comfortable living.

But it was considerably more difficult to rationalize away the studied hostility which the Russians showed their wartime ex-Allies, the uncooperativeness and blunt obstructionism which Americans and British met at every turn.

The antagonism worked on all levels and in all things. Socially, the Russians rarely met Allied personnel except at formal functions. Not that the Americans and British didn't try to get them to visit and relax; the Russians simply wouldn't come, or if they did they failed to return the invitation. Their own parties were lavish, with stiff doses of protocol and vodka; they asked only as many Allied guests as regulations called for, and then went grimly to work to drink them off their feet.

In their official relations, they took maximum advantage of their superior position in areas where their influence was paramount. Long before newspaper readers the world over had learned about Soviet rigidity from the performances of Messrs. Molotov, Vishinsky, Gusev and Gromyko at the United Nations and other international meetings, Anglo-American representatives at ACC sessions in the occupied countries had grown weary of Soviet tactics, their interminable red tape, their overbearing manner, the petty indignities and major rebuffs the Russians took pleasure in inflicting.

Against the foreign press the Russians behaved with special aloofness. They went out of their way to disabuse reporters of any archaic notions about Russian cordiality. They systematically foiled every sincere attempt to obtain an authoritative exposition of their case.

In Budapest, an agent was put on my tail after I had cabled the contents of the secret treaty by which Hungary had contracted to turn over half of her economy to the Soviet Union. The Russians wanted very much to know where I had obtained the treaty's text. The spy assigned to me was no ordinary fellow but a member in good standing of the NKVD, according to my own counter-spy, who trailed the Russian while the Russian trailed me. On our second day out, I did the

approved thing: I invited my Soviet shadow to walk with me instead of skulking behind me, and step up to the bar instead of thirsting outside. He stared at me, plodded ahead to the corner, then peered into a shop window until I passed. That night, when I emerged late into a darkened street, he materialized out of the blackness and whispered: "Please, *Gospodin Korespondyent*, please don't talk to me again. It could get me executed."

FEAR AND THE CAPITALIST OGRE

There was the case, among several I knew, of the Russian major who served as liaison officer for Russian ex-slaveworkers at a displaced-persons camp in the American zone of Germany. This Major, who had endeared himself to the American staff by his co-operative attitude, was suddenly replaced. He advised the camp commandant that he was being recalled to Moscow, where he would be court-martialed and shot. He knew why but wouldn't explain. The horrified American pleaded with him not to go back, offered to hide him, send him to Paris, do anything to save him. The Russian was wistfully grateful—but went to Moscow. Three weeks later his replacement told the American: "The Major has been shot. He was accused of being friendly with Americans. This meant he was protecting your interests and not ours."

I think the single most unpalatable thing about the Russians, as I saw them in occupied Europe, was the fear which dominated their relations with us and with each other. This fear had crucial significance for a liberal. It traced back to the core of the Soviet system. To see this fear was to know, once and for all time, that such a system could hardly exert beneficial influence on any decent society of the future to which the liberal might aspire.

The fear was not merely an obedience to orders from above which dictated that relations with Westerners must be severely limited in order to avoid contamination by corrupt capitalist influences. It was a pervading dread of creating the slightest suspicion of individuality, of independent thinking, of stepping a hairsbreadth out of line. It meant that one had to be on permanent guard against oneself and all others, because who could tell which companion or subordinate might be an informer?

Nobody was immune from this omnipresent fear, not even the highest officers and commissars, for they too might have aides, or perhaps chauffeurs, delegated to listen and make notes.

The fear at the root of Soviet behavior also compelled a total loss of initiative. If Russian replies to Allied requests were sometimes inter-

minably delayed, it was not so much because of discourtesy but because of unwillingness to take responsibility for the answer. No Russian signed any document if he could find a superior to sign it for him.

"How do the Russians impress you as individuals?" I asked a senior British officer with much experience in parleys with the Soviets. "What sort of fellows are they?" "They aren't," he replied. "They don't show any personal traits. They're automatons. They all act alike."

When American and British negotiators sat down at a conference table, they usually had a clear notion in their heads of what they would like to get and of how far they could go in conceding things. But the Russian sat down with iron-clad instructions in his briefcase. "Getting the Russians to state their case is like pulling teeth," veterans of tripartite negotiations testified. "They don't talk. They want to draw you out instead. They listen to what you have to say, and if it fits anywhere within their own limits they start haggling, trying to whittle you down and get as much as possible for nothing. Then you just wait until your Russian has relayed everything you've said and received fresh instructions from on high."

But fear of responsibility and fear of being suspected as disloyal were not the only reasons, or even the major ones, for the antagonism with which Anglo-Americans were treated. Deep underneath the hostility lay the conviction that the West was The Enemy, incarnation of all anti-Communist sin, and that the Soviet Union could not breathe freely until the democracies and their capitalistic abominations were destroyed.

I don't know what the makers of Soviet policy really thought of the democracies, but I do know what lesser Russians thought, and it was dismal. They had an ignorance of the West which could only be described as monumental. All the distortions and hair-raising legends which Kremlin propaganda pumped into the Soviet people for decades had been absorbed and believed. The British Parliament, the U.S. Congress, were dominated by fascists. Massacres of workers, race riots, lynchings, swindles, embezzlements and plots against the Soviet Union were the order of the day, every day. The workers of the West, groaning under oppression from fat, cigar-smoking capitalists, looked hopefully through their tears toward the glorious USSR for comfort and eventual salvation. Nothing loathe, the USSR would some day oblige, for was it not thus written in Stalin's own words, in his *Problems of Leninism*, which sold by the millions and was the Soviet primer, the good Russian's guide to politics? "It is inconceivable," the ruler of all the Russias had said for all to read, "that the Soviet Republic should

continue to exist for a long period side by side with imperialistic states—ultimately one or the other must conquer....”

The Russians were like tough little boys who have won their first scrap and discovered their own strength. You could hardly find any Russians who didn't have at least one medal, which they always wore, and if they had five medals or fifteen medals, they seemed to be wearing every one of them, all the time. They were filled to the brim with their invincibility, and never missed an occasion to prove it by bad manners to the conquered peoples or to their own allies. They were almost Prussian in their arrogance, but without the Junker finesse. Every Soviet headquarters and barracks, every military vehicle, every column of marching troops, was covered over with placards and banners proclaiming the Red Army's greatness. It was all very childish, irritating and, I'm afraid, significant.

Dropping another bucket down the well of charity, one could haul up a variety of plausible arguments against taking this Russian ram-bunctiousness too seriously.

The Soviets had had a hard time for a quarter of a century, their backs to the wall, fighting internal collapse and foreign hostility. Now they'd won a great and bloody war, against terrible odds. What was more natural than that they should feel temporarily bigger than their boots, throwing their weight around, making faces at the other fellows, especially the ones who used to worry them from the capitalist side of the tracks? It was up to us to understand these things, to be grown up and adult, and let the Russians swagger a bit until they had calmed down like the decent chaps they basically were. Yes, it was up to *us* to prove to the Russians that we meant them no harm, that they could relax and go back to building a peaceful world.

The only flaw in this generous prescription for the Soviet malady was that while the psychonanalysts were thus deliberating, the patient was gathering daily evidence that his hallucinations were profitable.

Not considering other spheres of Russian influence but just the half of Europe where I saw the Soviets at work, it was painfully discernible that they were fortifying a position for aggression while we were uttering soothing syllables or clucking in mild protest. And their activities were bringing plain disaster, economic and spiritual, to the more than one hundred million people who had the bad luck to live along the European fringe of the new Russian empire. These millions also had some claim to the sympathies of Western liberalism.

12

The Case Against Russia

A thousand miles long and six hundred miles wide, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, Russia's Europe was a treasure trove which once produced about six million tons of steel, mined over one hundred million tons of coal, pumped practically all of Europe's oil, and grew nearly as much wheat as the U.S. Within this giant Middle-European reservoir were also contained a scarcely scratched wealth of bauxite, iron ore, manganese, copper, lead, antimony, zinc, silver and gold, the yet unharnessed electric might of mountain streams and cascades, vast stretches of timber, still unsown reaches of cotton, rice and tobacco, and the richly fertile central and Balkan plains.

A wise and honest steward would have turned this fortune to the common advantage of overseer and toiler. But Soviet policy everywhere (with the tentative exception of Czechoslovakia) aimed at spoliation rather than co-operation, the fortifying of the Soviet economic and military arsenal rather than the strengthening of the subject peoples. I know about Poland and Finland only by report, but all signs pointed to the same general pattern there as in Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Bulgaria. As for Esthonia, Latvia and Lithuania—totally enclosed within the USSR's borders—there hung over them the customary dead silence of Soviet "republics," but it would be foolish to hope that these annexed territories were not being exploited at least as thoroughly as the countries still nominally independent.

Even the Nazis gave Middle Europe better economic treatment than the liberating Russians who succeeded them—a shocking assertion but a true one. Whatever else their iniquities, the Germans did understand the economic interdependence between the Reich and the satellite states. Germany was a necessary market for them—and also a necessary source of supply. But the economies of Russia and her new satellites were competitive, not complementary. Both were normally exporters of food, agricultural produce and semiprocessed industrial goods. A new deal for the border economies could come only through industrialization and free markets, and such possibilities lay only in the Westerly direc-

tion. Instead, the Soviets prescribed uneven barter pacts, autarchy, and a narrow economy one step removed from Middle Europe's ruin.

Politically, Middle Europe under Russian guidance went into a moral decline which, for hypocrisy and unabashed violence, made the old regime's deceptions and tyrannies seem unimaginative.

The pace varied, but the tactics, the victims and the results were substantially the same. Slander and terrorization leveled the opposition and dispersed the masses. The words "fascist" and "democrat" were stretched like rubber bands: the first to damn all those unwilling to lick the Communist boot, the second to camouflage all those useful to the Communist purpose. The word "democracy" was applied to the new regimes, but "fascism" might have been a more appropriate description. There was certainly nothing democratic about the ex-fascists whom the Communist parties everywhere enlisted for their rank-and-file support and even for high places in their regimes. The will of the people was scarcely consulted by the gangs which the Communists everywhere employed to beat the way to power, riding in trucks, brandishing pistols, tommyguns and rubber clubs—the direct descendants of Storm Troopers except for major differences in costume and minor differences in slogans. Totalitarianism was a much apter name for the faceless State which emerged from this democratic masquerade, a State prattling of human freedoms but ruthless in their suppression, a State genuflecting before the people but depressing the people into a brutish, anonymous mass.

Life in the Communist scheme became for all a nervous cycle of noise and demonstrations, exhortations against reactionary foes at home and capitalist foes abroad, appeals to avenge and destroy. Old values of individual initiative, loyalty to friends, love of family, were derided. Passive acceptance of the new doctrine, moreover, was not sufficient. In the days of the prewar despotisms, one could at least shut one's eyes and ears, keep still, and not be molested. Now this was no longer possible. Now the system was totalitarian, not merely slipshod exploitation by a remote clique which took the profits but left at least the spirit free. This new regime hunted down the silent, demanded that they proclaim and parade their allegiance, because all who were not for the creed of the current messiah were judged to be against it and therefore candidates for liquidation. And with all this there was no more bread than before—and sometimes less.

A venerable leader of one of the surviving Jewish communities gave me, in a few tired, bitter words, the deadliest of all indictments of Russia's Europe. This was a man, remember, who had witnessed and

tasted all the horrors the Nazis had inflicted upon his decimated people. "I sometimes think," he told me, "that it would have been better if I and all the others who escaped had gone into the gas chambers. The time since the so-called liberation has been the worst I have ever lived, yes, even worse than under the Germans. With the Germans, you see, we knew what we could expect. We knew they intended to exterminate us. It was clear and simple and frank—and we, too, knew what we would have to do in order to survive. Besides, it didn't matter very much, after a while. One gets used even to the idea of annihilation. But now—now we know nothing. Everything is lies and deception. Now everybody, the Jew along with the rest, lives in a spiritual gas chamber, from which there is no escaping."

LOST OPPORTUNITY, RECOVERED DREAM

Even a diehard pro-Russian, believing that the Soviet Union was hemmed in by enemies and hence entitled to turn all of Middle Europe into an impregnable security zone, could not be very pleased with the results of the Russian efforts in this direction.

The Soviets flubbed their chance for real security.

Not that the common people of Middle Europe were fervidly pro-Russian. But they were thoroughly sick of the Nazis and of the war by the time the Red Army rolled in. The Soviets' desire for security in the borderlands was a reasonable ambition. They might have had it, through a mass allegiance built on gratitude and conviction. All they had to do was be firm but civilized, punishing the guilty and being decent to the rest.

Instead they built their security on fear alone—which was no security at all.

"We could have campaigned against Communism for twenty years," an old Bulgarian Social-Democrat wryly assured me, "and not done half so well as the Red Army."

Social-Democracy was a budding force in Middle Europe when the Russians arrived. It contained the seeds for a movement dedicated to Western ideals *and* collaboration between West and East. Every country in the area, even Rumania, had progressive elements which deserved the chance to help construct something better than totalitarianism.

But they were thwarted and rebuffed by Communist-Red Army ruthlessness—and effectively abandoned by the Western democracies. Under this double betrayal, it was nearly impossible to stand firm. Some liberals made their sorry peace with leftist extremism; more drifted over toward the extremism of the right. Isolated democratic elements

found themselves allied and identified with such archaic causes as monarchism and clericalism, and divested of their claim to independent leadership. Everywhere reaction profited.

This was the tragedy, as Milan Grol warned me after resigning the Vice-Premiership in Yugoslavia: that the rigidity of the Left tended to destroy all alternatives except a rigidity of the Right, so that one had either a Partisan Yugoslavia or a reactionary Greece. In the middle ground, the innocents—the little democrats and their civil liberties—disappeared.

Beneath the Communist grip, Russia's Europe rumbled with hate, with yearning for revenge. A vast Fifth Column was there now, extending for half a continent and capable of wrecking Soviet security, as the resistance movement of an earlier war had sabotaged Nazi security. The dangerous thing was that the reactionaries who would be the leaders of the new underground saw war between Russia and the West as their only salvation, and worked for it with every breath.

The Soviets nursed the fiction that Communist dominion in the satellite states was a purely local choice, a reflection of the "will of the people" as expressed in support of the people's party, the Communists. The fact, of course, was that local operations in Middle Europe were not only accomplished by Communist delegates of the Kremlin but with all the techniques of the Kremlin.

The resemblance went even beyond the Stalinist pattern, to the Tsarist pattern. Russia's Europe was an extension of the Soviet frontier in the Tsarist manner, which meant supervision over all the separate parts within the imperial borders, bone-dry exploration of each area's resources and suppression of *national* interests of each engulfed country in favor of higher *imperial* interests.

The Soviet Union, however, succeeded beyond the dreams of the older Russia—and beyond those of the Tsars' imperial rivals as well. The USSR was the single heir of old Austria and Turkey, and the real victor of two World Wars which had been partly fought for control of the Balkans.

But the Kremlin wanted more.

This was where the argument of last-ditch apologists for the Russians fell down—the argument which held that the Russians were justified, by the needs of their security, in taking whatever measures they felt necessary against the peoples inside their zone of security. It was an argument which had to crumble before the visible, cardinal fact that the Soviet "security zone" was a thing which grew bigger with success.

Soviet totalitarianism was for further export, across an unimpeded horizon beyond which bases for security turned into bases for empire.

The Dardanelles, Dedeagach, Salonika, Trieste were parts of the same master plan: the southward push to Mediterranean and Middle East.

Reaching for the Turkish Bosphorus was an old Tsarist habit, but Stalin had extended the bid to include the Straits *and* Eastern Turkey —*and* an open road toward the oil of Asia and Asia Minor. If the vacuum of non-Slavic, non-Communist Greece could be eliminated, puppet Bulgaria could get down to the warm Aegean at Thracian Dedeagach. In exchange, Bulgaria could contribute its piece of Macedonia to the large chunk around Salonika torn from Greece, the whole to “re-create” an independent Macedonia (which had never before existed) in Tito’s union of “independent” republics. Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Albania were already working on this Macedonian project (with the involuntary assistance of Greek chauvinists). A Balkan Federation of these three satellites, just one phase removed from a Soviet Republic, was another steppingstone in the southerly drive. So was Trieste, for which the Kremlin yearned even though its agent, Tito, already held the whole warm-water coast of Yugoslav Dalmatia.

At Trieste, the grand plan for the south dovetailed with the grander plan for the west. Enlarged from Tsarist specifications, the push westward was uniting and harnessing all the previously disunited resources of Middle Europe. There was no other explanation for the re-emergence of Pan-Slavism, that Tsarist relic which the Communists had once junked but which now was again arising like the dream of the old Slovak poet, who saw a giant Slav statue fashioned with Russia as the head, the Poles as the body, the Czechs as arms, the Serbs as legs, and the smaller states as the sword, buckler and shield. There was no other explanation either, for the shaping of a Central European Federation, the adaptation of strategic railways to the Russian gauge, the visits of State, the staff talks, the unpublished agreements, between Rumanians and Yugoslavs, Bulgarians and Yugoslavs, Yugoslavs and Hungarians, Hungarians and Poles, and so on. There was no other explanation, in fact, for the whole ruinous economic autarchy and exclusive system of interlocking alliances set up in Middle Europe—except as a springboard for further westerly expansion.

The first goal of the westward advance was Austria.

In the U.S. and Britain, Soviet ambitions for Austria had been only dimly known to the general public until the Moscow Conference of Foreign Ministers in the Spring of 1947. At this conference, Russian maneuvers blocked agreement on an Austrian peace treaty, especially its economic clauses.

Part of the Soviet purpose was to use Austria as a bargaining point for German reparations. Another reason to delay the treaty was that signature of it would have compelled the departure of the Red Armies which were "guarding communications to Austria" in Hungary and Rumania—and Soviet troops were still needed in those countries for a coup or two.

But Russian obstruction of the Austrian treaty also advertised to the world what the Allied Control Commission in Vienna had long known: the Kremlin's plans for political domination of Austria through economic pressure.

In 1943, Russia solemnly concurred with her Allies that Austria was not an aggressor but the first victim of Nazi aggression. The Big Three therefore agreed that Austria should be treated as a liberated people—no reparations, only a token occupation, and early re-establishment as a sovereign, independent state.

As soon as they got into the country, however, the Russians forgot all about this and launched a program of plunder on a vast scale to force Austria into the Soviet Union's political orbit as the price of escaping economic extinction.

Soviet "token occupation" forces in Austria were larger than all the other three forces combined. Maintenance charges for the Red Army were over four times as big as any other occupant's bill. Russia wanted 60 per cent of impoverished Austria's budget set aside for occupation charges; it was only due to British and American insistence that, by the third quarter of 1946, the figure was forced down to 35 per cent. The following year, after the Russians had blocked the peace treaty, the Americans decided to pay for their own keep henceforth—and reimbursed Austria for *all* previous U. S. occupation costs.

Meanwhile the Russians treated their own eastern zone—the bread-basket of Austria—as if it were a private reparations reservoir. One Red Army commandant over a village of 3,000 left for home with 14 loaded trucks. Throughout the area the Soviets made heavy food requisitions and seized many large farms.

On the other hand, they failed dismally in their pledges to co-operate in Four-Power feeding of the Austrian civilian population. As late as the third year of Austrian occupation, the Russians were the only one of the four Powers still consistently in arrears on civilian food deliveries. The U.S. and Britain were actually bringing in food for hungry Austria from abroad, but the Russians, who occupied the country's richest provinces, would not meet the minimum quota for Austrian relief from Austria's own production. Ostensibly because the program required American supervision of distribution, the Russians even cut their own zone off from deliveries of emergency \$100,000,000 Congressional relief shipments. They called such inspection an "infringement of Austrian sovereignty."

But the largest lien the Russians held on Austrian independence was the well-known Potsdam Agreement, which, as interpreted by Moscow, made the bulk of Austria's economy the property of the Soviet Union.

Here the Russians violated another inter-Allied pledge, the 1943 London Declaration. This stated that assets previously acquired by the Germans in the subjugated countries through outright force, or through bogus contracts made under duress, should not be recognized as German after liberation. The Russians simply said later that this did not apply to Austria, although they had already agreed that Austria was to be considered a subjugated country, not an Axis one.

On one fortnight spree, the Russians took to themselves fourteen concerns which represented 40, 40, 60 and 100 per cent respectively of Austria's capacity in electric bulbs, bridge building, power-plant equipment and rayon. One incomplete list of 125 seized enterprises—67 of which, the Austrians claimed, had no German capital whatsoever—included firms like the great Länderbank, the giant Schoeller-Bleckmann Iron Works, and the Danube Navigation Co., which gave the Soviets a monopoly control of Austria's economic lifeline on the Danube.

Even property extorted from the Jews by forced sales at blackmail prices was defined as German assets by the Russians.

The Soviets' grab also included foreign property. One of their richest hauls was the Zistersdorf oil field, Europe's newest and third largest, most of which was owned by Dutch, British, Canadians and Americans.

Despite all this, the Austrians were willing to pay off for the "German" properties at almost any price in order to get the Russians out of the country. The Vienna government decreed the nationalization

of most of Austria's major industries, then offered to compensate Moscow for all properties where German title was confirmed by Four-Power examination. But the Russians were not eager to be paid off. They cynically stalled an inter-Allied Commission's efforts to examine Soviet claims and even helped themselves to an Anglo-American oil refinery—as a “German asset”—while the Commission was actually in session. They maneuvered to retain extraterritorial status in their properties. In plain language, they wanted to own a substantial part of Austria outright. Under such terms, an independent Austria would be impossible.

There was no doubt how the Austrian people felt about a permanent partnership with the USSR. In a free 1945 election, only about 5 per cent of them voted for the Communist Party.

The Russians knew the only way they could ever bring Austria to her knees was through economic necessity. As Chancellor Leopold Figl told me, “They offer us bread in exchange for the heart of the nation.”

In mid-1947 the Russians were openly caught in a major bid to loosen the screws in exchange for sweet Austrian reasonableness. Their usual agents, the Communists, secretly advised the majority People's Party that Russia would never sign a peace treaty with the existing conservative Government. But the Soviets would be very happy to reverse their position and even give economic assistance if the Government would only be “reorganized.” All that was needed was to drop several “pro-American” ministers and give control of the police to the Communists (who held a total of four seats in Parliament) in preparation for new elections.

Consolidation of the Communist position in the more easterly countries succeeded because the Allies there were powerless to take effective action. In Austria it failed, at least tentatively, because the ACC there was a working concern, not a Russian monopoly, and because the Allies were backing the champions of Austrian independence with supplies and direct physical protection as well as verbal encouragement.

It remained to be seen how long the Allies could continue to stand firm, paying in at one end while the Soviets collected at the other. Austria was the key to Danubia. Her fate would have strong, immediate repercussions in neighboring Italy, Czechoslovakia and Germany. But, in the longer view, Austria was also a basic test of Allied power to resist and repulse the threat of totalitarian encroachment

on a ground where maneuverability, unlike Eastern Europe, was still more or less equal. As such, the outcome in Austria would be watched and carefully noted by all Europe—and all the world. The only thing sure was that the Russians would keep on trying.

ORIGINS OF A DOCTRINE

Most people will agree, I think, that it would be undesirable to see Soviet totalitarianism continue its march across Europe in the direction of Portugal. The question now arises: How could the Russians be stopped?

I won't try to answer with a "what-we-should-do-to-be-saved" chapter. But I do suggest that the one way *not* to stop the Russians is by conciliatory discussion and hopeful concession.

Russia's Europe was built on deception and force. The Russians made concessions only when they had to, and stayed true to their agreements only until they had enough force to cancel the concessions out. They did not understand honest compromise. They regarded it as a sign of weakness. They had no respect for it. The only thing they respected was straight talk, with the promise of force behind it.

The record in Russia's Europe demonstrated Soviet (and Communist) lack of receptiveness to a fair bargain. The record also suggested the dangers of offering fair bargains to them.

On the other hand, and quite consistently, Russians were highly receptive to the eloquence of an opponent who knew what he wanted and was capable of reaching for it. In such cases, Russians showed no resentment. On the contrary, they were delighted to meet a kindred spirit.

This was true of Russian policy and of individual Russians. Everyone who has ever had official business with Soviet Russians *in circumstances where he was at least on equal terms with them* will recall incidents to prove this. I had few such experiences—because Russians in their part of Occupied Europe rarely permitted Americans or anybody else to get on equal terms with them. Perhaps the point can be made by telling about two other Americans, in Germany and Austria—where there was a bit more room to swing.

One of these Americans was a conducting officer assigned to squire a group of high Russian officers on a tour of the American zone in Germany. "I made the mistake," he said later, "of treating them as I would my own superiors. Their chief, a major general, looked and behaved like Wallace Beery. We had a busy itinerary, and he saw plenty, but there was one place he wanted to go, the town of K——,

where I couldn't take him. For ten days he insisted, and I gave him polite excuses. Relations got very strained. Finally he announced he wouldn't move another inch unless I took him back to that other place. Well, I blew up. I said: 'Okay, you'll be returned immediately to your own zone.' The General asked: 'Do you mean that? You mean it is forbidden to see K——?' 'Yes,' I shouted. 'Then why didn't you say so in the first place?' the General laughed. For the rest of the trip he and his officers were the pleasantest guys in Europe..."

Then there was the American in Austria, an information officer, who was having trouble with his Soviet opposite number. The Russian wanted all Soviet movies to get into the American part of Austria, but no American movies into the Soviet part. He kept on saying: "It's out of the question!". At last the American stopped talking through an interpreter and yelled in Serbian: "Listen, you! I'm Slavic too. I'm just as bullheaded as you. If you say one more time that anything is 'out of the question,' so help me I'll knock you down and kick you!" The Russian gazed at him thoughtfully, then grinned: "Brother of mine, I thought you were a foolish American. Kindly tell me again what you would like me to do for you..."

I am not suggesting that the above is a model of language for diplomatic negotiations with the USSR. I merely point out that the stories, trivial in themselves, reflect the personality and methods of the Soviets better than the dream-picture repeatedly drawn for us by Mr. Henry Wallace.

If the only thing which impressed the Russians was a strength greater than their own, it follows that nothing but disaster could result from a softening of our voice and muscle.

Convinced as they were that war with the West was inevitable, the Russians would interpret every weakening of our diplomatic position, every lowering of our military guard, as an encouragement to press harder.

Time, they felt, was working for them.

Whenever we wrote a feeble protest against Soviet policy, and did nothing—or could do nothing—to back it up, we lost one more degree of our prestige with the smaller States and exposed one more proof of our unreliability. Whenever we let a small country down by a poor compromise with the Soviet, we grew that much weaker in the loyalties of the rest to the common democratic cause.

Concurrently, according to the Marxist creed, we were steadily advancing toward economic collapse. Western capitalism was doomed, the Russians profoundly believed. With the crash, all hopes of non-

Communist Europe for better living standards would die, and with them the last effective resistance to the Communist parties in those countries. The nature of Western democracy could only hasten our disintegration. The American people would grow tired of international responsibility, of its costs in taxes and material sacrifices. Sooner or later, they would quit.

Soviet tactics were clear, for anyone willing to look at them on the front pages of the newspapers: to spread disunity abroad, to confuse and divide us at home, to inch forward at every encouragement and, above all, to delay—to slow down the efforts of international collaboration, hamstringing the United Nations and all its auxiliaries, veto this action, boycott that committee, and wait, just wait, for the Marxian dogma of capitalist ruin to reach its inexorable fulfillment. As soon as they were sure they could win, the Russians would strike. Otherwise, the history of Soviet policy in Europe and elsewhere since the war's end in 1945 was meaningless.

It was apparent, then, that the first principle of intelligent defense against such an opponent was to convince him that it would be dangerous to count us out. We needed to make up our minds on a frank and definite policy, and then stick to it—telling the Russians just where we stood, and making no threats which we were not prepared to carry out. Since they measured strength in terms of fighting power, we would even have to spend money on a strong defense force, and spend time on military training. In our enlightened day, to revert to the old adage of keeping peace by preparing for war seemed primitive, but we were unfortunately dealing with a primitive adversary. So long as he persisted in his belief that military weakness meant feebleness of spirit, we would have to play it his way.

But big guns and superbombs and civilian armies were, at best, a passive tool of diplomacy. The economic power which made them possible could also serve an active purpose—sponsoring a long-term plan of European recovery which would shore up and beat back the advance of Communism.

Contrary to fond Kremlin impressions, we were still somewhat remote from economic ruin—though Soviet nonco-operation in places like Austria and Germany and on problems like international economic revival was designed to speed the day. We still had the know-how and the wherewithal to carry on for a substantial time to come. What we needed was the political know-how to apply our strength quickly and with maximum effect overseas, where economic ruin was fast descending.

If, by a miracle possible only in totalitarian systems, the Russians completely reversed themselves and gave concrete proof of good faith, then American aid to Europe, as it had been envisaged by the Marshall Plan, could have the "One World" dimensions we devoutly wanted it to have. But if the Russians persisted in seeking political advantage from West European chaos, we would have to apply our resources exclusively—and quickly—to the rehabilitation of those peoples we could still count as our allies. The paramount problem was how not to squander our treasure in misguided efforts to fatten our enemies into becoming our friends—how to use it instead to keep our lean and hungry friends from going over to our enemies.

Economic misery was indeed the most potent ally of Communism—except in countries where Communism had already reached power. In those countries, people could no longer make the error of turning eastward for salvation, because they were looking the East full in the face and regretting it. It was only in the so-called capitalist countries that men tormented by hunger and injustice could still be driven to Communism as an untried alternative lavish in promises.

The costs of giving such countries the aid they needed to resist the lure of the Marxist drums would be large. It would be a cruel strain on the temper and endurance of the American people, who had so recently fought a long, exhausting World War and deserved something better than a summons to further sacrifices. But, in the last analysis, it was a sound investment, and the only possible one. Failure to make it would allow the Russians to move forward by default and crumble our outer defenses prior to the final attack. The costs to us of that final attack would be monstrous—and its outcome might bring the end of everything we had previously fought to preserve.

Our first deliberate and large-scale implementation of an aggressive economic policy was the program of aid to Greece and Turkey.

It was important to understand from the beginning that no amount of money could convert Greece and Turkey into military fortresses.

Both stood on the periphery of the Soviet Union, colossus of the European continent, and within instant range of the Red Army, largest in the world. Whatever we built, the Russians could sweep in at will.

Nevertheless, we *had* to be in Greece and Turkey. We had to show the world—and the Russians—that we were there. Our absence would be a flagrant invitation to aggression. The fall of Greece and Turkey,

without our support, would immeasurably weaken the will of other countries to resist. Our presence was psychologically imperative.

We could send only a token force, and could give only a token contribution toward military preparedness—but we would be *there*, for the Russians to see and for them to understand that this time we were in earnest.

But this purpose was negative, and not enough. We could do much more. We could not only combat Communism but offer something better. We could put some doctrine into the Truman Doctrine. We could make our strength work fruitfully *for* democracy, instead of sterilely *against* Communism.

Democracy in Greece and Turkey was in great need of defense, not only against the threat from the totalitarian Left but also against the threat from the reactionary Right. In Russia's Europe we had missed our chances to rally our real and only reliable friends—the men of good will in the middle ground. In Greece and Turkey, such forces were still recruitable. The makers of our policy could enlist them—or enlist the men of reaction, the men for whom the word "democracy" was only a slogan of convenience. The choice would be crucial, with reverberations around the world and far away from Ankara and the Parthenon.

**JOURNEY
HOME**

13

Greece Again—and a Doctrine

I have to admit that the Greek situation on my second visit in 1946 didn't look any better than when I had seen it in 1945—even though my entire attitude had been transformed in the interim by the spectacle of Russia's Europe.

Allied policy in Greece still added up to betrayal of the Greek people.

In 1945 I saw Allied policy as betrayal to the extreme Right, through imposition of a reactionary clique upon a democratic people. In 1946 I saw it as betrayal to the extreme Left, through support of a reactionary clique whose excesses were forcing a democratic people to move closer and closer to the Communists.

I remained a critic of Allied policy not despite my change of attitude toward the Soviet Union but because of it—because now I could sympathize with Allied motives in Greece but had to reject Allied methods as likely to achieve the opposite of their purpose.

My first time in Greece, I was a lopsided liberal equipped with a documented knowledge of the faults in Allied foreign policy but no comparable knowledge—or any real awareness—of the Soviet menace to human freedom. To me the British program in Greece was a poorly-concealed drive to hold an imperial position, with the U. S. abetting this by nonintervention. So far as I could see, Russia was leaving Greece strictly alone. Communism was an absurdly improbable contingency in a Greece where practically every citizen seemed to have political opinions totally at variance with those of his neighbor and where every cobbler and streetcar conductor owned chickens and a plot of land in the country.

Nine months later, when I returned to Athens, I no longer had illusions about the identity of the major threat to Greek liberty. This time I knew that if the British quit before Greece was pacified under a government accepted by the majority, the Russians would have an excellent opportunity to take over—not the Russian army necessarily,

not right away anyhow, but their Communist agents and system, which would be tantamount to the same thing. It would mean the end of even a hope for Greek democracy. To prevent such a disaster, a strong Allied control was not only necessary but intensely desirable—even if it smacked of Western “imperialism.”

The tragedy was, however, that Allied procedures were steadily achieving the contrary effect. Sooner or later they would provoke the final estrangement of a majority of the Greek people, the consequent growth of Greek “Communism” from a compact but numerically insignificant nucleus to an irresistible national force, and the decisive loss of Greece by the West.

These were hardly the goals for which a desperate British diplomacy had been struggling since the first moment that liberation of Greece from the Germans became a military possibility.

At Teheran in 1943, Winston Churchill had been compelled to give up his demand for invasion of Europe’s “soft under-belly.” He wanted an Anglo-American army to share with Russia in the occupation of the Balkans—for reasons which are unfortunately more obvious today than they were in 1943. Churchill was thinking ahead to the problems of postwar Europe. So was Joseph Stalin—and he insisted that the Second Front must be established in the West, which would keep Anglo-American influence far removed from the Soviet preserve. President Roosevelt was thinking only of winning the war. He was impressed by the sound strategic arguments of his own chiefs of staff. A cross-Channel invasion of *Festung Europa* would undoubtedly cost less in men, resources and time than Churchill’s Mediterranean plan. The consequence of leaving Eastern Europe under the exclusive military dominion of the Kremlin was something which the President hoped could be amiably adjusted later on. He cast the deciding vote.

A year later, in Moscow, Churchill was obliged to make a second sacrifice. He assented to predominant Soviet influence in the northern Balkans, particularly in the Black Sea countries of Rumania and Bulgaria, in exchange for British influence in Mediterranean Greece. He did not agree to the total Soviet absorption which followed, but he did acknowledge that proximity—and the logical inferences from the Teheran division of military labors—entitled the USSR to special advantages in the Soviet borderlands. Greece, however, would remain a Western bastion.

It is idle to speculate whether Churchill’s interest in Greece was primarily to save democracy or keep out Russia—whether his motives were ideological or imperial. The point is that his policy tended to

achieve neither. It encouraged the reactionaries and weakened the democrats without diminishing the political appeal of the extreme Left. The latter, in fact, benefited from persecution, as usual.

The British Labor Opposition had correctly and most sonorously denounced Tory policy in Greece. But when the Laborites themselves came to power in July, 1945, they inherited more than the Greek problem. They inherited the Soviet problem too. Laborite education on the Russians was quick and eye-opening. It was not merely a prejudiced briefing from permanent officials of the Foreign Office, but direct contact with Kremlin negotiators and with the achievements of Kremlin agents. The Labor Government's vigorous reaction to all these was genuinely liberal. The Laborites saw with instant clarity where the real peril to democracy lay—in Greece and elsewhere.

But the means which British Labor adopted in Greece to resist this peril had less clarity in them, and much panic.

The methods were hardly to be distinguished in virtue or in muddle from the techniques of Labor's predecessor. Profoundly shaken by sudden exposure to the full meaning of the Soviet threat, Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin and his colleagues seized on Conservative techniques in Greece—the same which the Laborite opposition had excoriated before the British elections—and adopted them, with small changes, for their own. The purposes were undoubtedly democratic, but the results were as pernicious as ever.

The Laborites arrived, in the person of Foreign Under-Secretary Hector McNeil, and set about preparing an election and plebiscite. These were intended to end Greek instability by producing a parliamentary regime and a choice between monarchy and republic. McNeil began well. He supervised the creation of a new provisional government headed by the aged but earnest republican, Sophoulis, who hated Communists and fascists with equal zeal. This Centrist Government made its debut in November, 1945, with pledges by the British that the elections would be held only after order had been re-established and voters' lists properly drawn up.

The only complaint to be made about this was that nothing was done to re-establish order or prepare an honest election. Pro-royalists installed by previous governments with Tory British blessing in the Army, National Guard, police and judiciary continued their operations unabated. Terrorization of republicans by illegal rightist gangs proceeded without pause. Premier Sophoulis was powerless to stop them, especially with the British hampering his efforts to clean house. But in faraway London, the harassed Labor Government grappled with the numerous deadlocks of a divided world and one fine day decided

that the Greek crisis, at least, must be regulated once and for all. Turning their backs on the accumulated evidence that the republican Left was the target of an organized vendetta which would make fair elections impossible, the Laborites determined on elections in the Spring—whereupon the Sophoulis Government set the date for March 31, 1946.

Meanwhile, London had proposed a Four-Power Commission to watch the elections and hand down a verdict on their honesty. The shrewd Russians, not eager to sanction a precedent which could be used later against them in their own European bailiwick, righteously declined to have anything to do with such an "intervention" in the domestic affairs of a "sovereign State." But the Americans and French accepted, and in due course an Anglo-Franco-American "Allied Mission For Observing Greek Elections" (AMFOGE) arrived in Athens. I flew down from Bucharest in the middle of March to observe the observers and take notes on this first postwar experiment in controlled democracy. It was about as experimental as a set of loaded dice.

MISSIONARIES IN THE GREEK WILDERNESS

The Mission had scarcely installed itself when the Left announced a complete boycott on the elections which the Mission had come at great trouble and expense to inspect.

The boycott was no monopoly of the Communists. Seven distinct political groups were involved. Among them were the Socialists (ELD), who had quit the Communist-controlled EAM after the Civil War but were now back in a united front because royalist fanaticism gave them no other choice. Also in the boycott were democratic factions as moderate as the party of ex-Foreign Minister John Sophianopoulos, who had represented Greece at the San Francisco Conference, and the party of Emmanuel Tsouderos, Premier of Greece's conservative Government-in-Exile for nearly three wartime years. Sophianopoulos was as Communist as Clement Attlee, Tsouderos as leftist as Thomas E. Dewey.

But the U. S. members of the Allied Mission decided they had come to watch an election, and by golly they were going to watch one. The British delegation was quietly pleased by this firm attitude, and the French tagged along. The Mission proceeded to rig up the most elaborate and complicated administrative paraphernalia that the people of Greece had witnessed since the departure of the Roman legionaries.

Greece was divided into five AMFOGE parts. A district bureau was installed in each zone, headed by a Commissioner with the personal rank of Minister, a large staff of assistants, and a fleet of jeeps. Difficult climbs into mountainous country were accomplished on mules. Athens headquarters had C-47 transport planes to fly personnel and documents

all over the country, and tiny spotter planes to land on terrain where no larger aircraft could come down. A flotilla of caiques kept the mainland connected with the myriad of farflung Greek islands. Powerful radio transmitters linked Athens to all parts of the AMFOGE domain. Tons of data on 1,556 individually-inspected electoral districts poured in by wireless and plane from the five bureaus.

Despite this impressive equipment, AMFOGE was unequal to its assignment.

To begin with, it had recruited the wrong kind of personnel to do the investigating in the field. There were one hundred American teams, one hundred British and forty French. Each team was a trio: an officer-observer, a soldier-driver of the same nationality, and a Greek civilian interpreter. The observer was the key man. Upon the accuracy of his reports depended the accuracy of the Mission's conclusions. But only the French, whose average political awareness as a people is higher anyway, selected observers of sufficient political maturity. The French sent majors and even colonels into the field; their average age was well above thirty years. The British and Americans sent boy lieutenants and captains, average age certainly not more than twenty-three. Not only had Allied officers of Greek origin been ruled out, but also candidates who admitted that they had read up on Greek matters and knew a thing or two.

The men selected to con Greek voting lists for evidence of false registration and investigate complaints of terrorism could not speak or read the language of the country. Criteria for recruitment were youth, physical stamina, "mental alertness"—but total innocence of Greek complications. Before arriving in Greece, the assembled observers received the most cursory briefing on Greek "background" at a "school" in Italy. In consequence, the Mission had for its eyes and ears in Greece a collection of young men who were excellent mountain climbers, hard workers and agreeable fellows but who were quite baffled by the complexities of Greek politics—than which there were none more complex to be found anywhere in the wide world.

OLYMPIANS ON OLYMPUS

A crucial weakness of AMFOGE was its limited power. The Mission's function was to *report* fraud and violence, not combat them. It had no corrective or police authority. On the island of Crete, AMFOGE officials were unable even to accompany me to a republican rally which royalists had previously announced they would try to break up. "We're forbidden to attend all political meetings," I was

told. "That's to avoid the impression that our presence means we favor the particular party holding the meeting. If there's any trouble today, we'll just have to investigate it later on..." The Mission's business was not to obtain an honest election but simply to determine whether or not the election had been honest.

In effect, the Mission was advising leftist voters to go out and try to vote, and if they had their heads broken in the attempt the Mission would be pleased to certify to that effect when the whole thing was over!

The Communists may have had an ulterior motive in the boycott: to delay the tranquillization of the country which an electoral settlement might have achieved. But for the Socialists and moderates, at any rate, the real purpose of the boycott was simply self-defense.

The Mission's field operations began one month before the election date. Very shortly, many of the AMFOGE people were subconsciously identifying their own prestige with the prestige of the elections. They seemed to think that the Mission's success depended on the elections' success. Consequently, they regarded the boycott as a personal affront to themselves. Others, sublimely ignorant of the complex elements in the Greek scene, took refuge from their bewilderment in the limerick:

*The embarrassing people called Greeks
Have divided themselves into cliques.
How awkward the fact
Whichever we back
We'll be wrong in a couple of weeks.*

When I interviewed the suave chief of the U. S. delegation, white-haired, triple-chinned Henry F. Grady, the fact-findings of the field observers were only half completed and the elections were still two weeks off, but he was already able to assure me privately that the chances of disagreement on the final verdict among the three Allied delegations were "extremely remote." There would be a single post-elections announcement by the Mission, not a majority and minority report, he was in a position to say. Everything indicated, he declared with satisfaction, that leftist protests were exaggerated, that the leftists would even vote, and that the elections would be "as honest or better than previous Greek elections"—an unsolicited sneer at Greek political maturity, since Greece had experienced five elections between 1920 and 1935 which were among the most adult in Balkan history.

After sitting at Ambassador Grady's feet I went forth into the provinces in search of evidence to support his sunny optimism. Before long I fell in with a member of the royalist "X" gang, and had the pleasure of his company at dinner. He was a friendly young fellow, a veteran, long demobilized but still in a sergeant's uniform.

"One of the King's candidates is speaking here tonight, and I'm down here to protect him against the Reds," he enthusiastically confided. "We've a complete military set-up in the mountains. Supplies? That's easy. We know where the Communist villages are. When we need anything, we raid them. Make plenty of arrests, too. When we catch someone special who isn't fit to live, we kill him like a dog. The police are no trouble. They even come to us for help and advice."

The rest of my five-day tour of southern Greece uncovered a dozen other reasons for postponing the elections.

Corinth, Argos and Tripolis were crowded with leftist refugees from the mountain villages. The crown and the letter "X" were painted in blue on every wall but in only one town among fifteen was EAM still permitted to have offices. The prefect of Messenia was an appointee of the liberal Sophoulis Government; when I gave him a lift between Kalamata and Megaloupolis, a ninety-minute trip, he took two bodyguards with him. A peasant girl told me in detail how the "X"-ites killed her mother and brother because another brother had once belonged to ELAS. The possession of arms was punishable by twenty years' imprisonment, but a rightist magistrate in Nauplion explained with a wink: "We let the boys off lightly on the excuse that they are suffering from 'partial confusion.'"

On my last day in the Peloponnesus I turned down a chance to make \$6,000. It happened in Kalamata, where a royalist gang leader named Manganas had butchered twelve hostages a month earlier. The official price on Manganas' head was 30,000,000 drachmas. The chief of the advisory British Police Mission in the area told me he had led Greek gendarmes for 150 miles on foot across the mountains vainly hunting for Manganas. After listening to this eloquent story I dropped in at headquarters of the Kalamata *gendarmerie*, where I let it be known I admired Manganas and greatly desired to interview the hero. Thereupon I was given precise directions on how to find him. In fact, a quarter-hour later, while I was packing for the return trip to Athens, the local X-ite chief called at my hotel and offered to conduct me personally to Manganas' "hide-out," a scant three hours beyond Kalamata.

The Peloponnesus could have been expected to excel in terrorism against the Left, since the royalists there were so ardent that even the donkeys had the King's picture tied to their tails. But the man-hunt was on in all other parts of the country. I was visiting the Socialist leader Tsirimokos in Athens when a railway official telephoned to say the authorities could not guarantee Tsirimokos' safety on a trip to Lamia, in central Greece, where he was to make a speech. Even a candidate of Papandreou's party, a man who had fought in the civil war against EAM, was driven off the island of Cephalonia. Best of all, the royalist candidate Tsailas in Salonika openly berated his own running mates as "bankrupt, incapable quislings," allied with bandits.

Ten cabinet ministers resigned rather than condone the elections. The retiring Minister of Security, Mercouris, publicly charged that weapons confiscated from ELAS had been given to the rightists. The retiring Vice-Premier, Kafandaris, pilloried the British for having blocked a purge of the police. When asked to rebuke General Tsakalotos for banning leftist posters, Premier Sophoulis said: "I do not interfere with Tsakalotos. He is an X-ite leader. He obeys nobody."

The desperate Premier confessed to foreign correspondents that the prerequisites for a free vote were lacking but that "international considerations" made it impossible to postpone Election Day. By "international considerations" Sophoulis meant Anglo-American insistence on pushing the Greek issue to a vote. From this vote London and Washington hoped to get a regime which could be called constitutional and be firm against Communist-Soviet enchantments. Both Governments publicly and serenely proclaimed their inability to see any good reason for postponement. Wasn't AMFOGE on hand to insure a democratic vote? The proceedings had all the high odor of a Munich in miniature.

VERDICT

The election itself went off as quietly as could be expected in Greece. A scrimmage in Athens' Omonia Square on Election Eve hospitalized thirty-three leftists and six policemen. Sporadic countrywide gunplay on Election Day caused a mere twenty deaths. This hardly ruffled the surface. The most potent slogan in the election lexicon was *Apochil* (Abstain). Peddlers even hawked *Apochi* cigarettes and pennants. With numerous encouragements, however, a large vote was "recorded."

Among these encouragements was the fact that the registers looked quite abnormally "normal" as compared with the registration in Greece's last previous election ten years earlier—despite an estimated population loss of at least 800,000 due to the war, the failure of 60,000

displaced Greeks to return to their homes, the ineligibility of some 100,000 others because of changed residences, and the inability of many thousands more to sign up because of intimidation, imprisonment or bureaucratic disqualifications. The archaic and padded lists afforded a golden occasion to Greek experts in electoral voting-card tricks.

Furthermore, the much-touted indelible liquid stain which AMFOGE had promised in limitless gallons, so that every voter's thumb might be dipped in it and repeaters detected, failed to appear.

When the Greek Government had finished counting the votes, nobody was surprised to learn that the royalists had received some 62 per cent of the ballots.

It was also quite apparent that in many districts the number of voters had been far below the number of registered names, the gaps ranging from 30 to as high as 50 per cent.

The Left seized on this as proof of the boycott's success. The Right, acutely embarrassed, blamed it on the fact that the registration lists had contained the names of the dead, missing and unborn—a point which the Right had indignantly denied before the elections. The truth probably lay somewhere in between, and beyond all scientific analysis by AMFOGE'S mumbo-jumbo of samples, averages, tests and logarithms. Some of the dead had voted, and some of the dead had rested quietly. In any case the sum of the total republican votes plus the most conservative estimate of abstentions made it clear that the apparent royalist majority at the polls was actually a minority in the nation.

For ten days after the elections, the Mission's statisticians, public opinion experts and literary artists labored. On the eleventh day they brought forth a statement, simultaneously released in London, Washington and Paris, which declared the vote "a true and valid verdict" by the Greek people, "capable of standing comparison as to decorum with general elections" in the Western democracies!

This AMFOGE report was a masterpiece of half-admissions and half-denials. It recommended a "complete recompiling of all registration lists in Greece" before the next national vote; it condemned the registration figures as "inaccurate and misleading"—but it found "no evidence of fraud on an important scale." Terrorism "did have some effect on the election"—but "without materially affecting the outcome." "Some of the *gendarmerie* showed partisanship," but this "had a very minor influence on the general results." Bolstering its conclusions in a fog of erudite statistics, the Mission found that 40 per cent of qualified

voters had not voted, but that only 9.3 per cent had abstained for political reasons, and that the maximum boycott could not have been over 20 per cent.

ROYALIST TOBOGGAN

AMFOGE settled nothing and convinced nobody. But its effect was pernicious. The Mission's report sanctified the all-royalist government which now entered office. Secure in Three-Power blessings, this regime proceeded to take the step which had long been the single monarchist cure-all for Greek economic and political woes: the restoration of the King. Amid nationwide disorders—and shrill Soviet protests to the United Nations' Security Council—a royalist-managed plebiscite decided by 70 per cent of the votes cast to bring George II home.

The twice-exiled monarch had spent only six of his fifty-six years in his Athenian palace, and had once been heard referring to kingship as "a rotten job." This time he had only six months of it, and then dropped dead. He was succeeded by his brother Paul, a prince of marked pro-fascist tendency and very devoted to his German, ex-Nazi princess. But this stimulus was not needed by the royalist politicians who, from the moment of their accession to power in April, 1946, had by their folly been laboring on all fronts to achieve Greece's final ruin.

From that moment, the British had ceased all interference in Greek internal affairs. Britain's hands-off policy was a curious blend of timidity, Labor idealism and unrealistic loyalty to the results of the election certified by AMFOGE. Having committed themselves to abide by the verdict, the British now stood by to "let the people rule." Except that the people obviously had not chosen this government, and this government had nothing to offer the people save disaster.

In the year between the 1946 elections and the arrival of the U. S. Greek-Aid Mission, the *laissez-faire* economic program of the majority (Populist) party managed to waste most of the nation's \$175,000,000 in foreign-exchange assets without doing Greece's sickly economy the slightest good. The regime removed all import restrictions, supplying dollars and sterling lavishly for the purchase of Packards for politicians, lipsticks, nylons, Swiss watches and other profitable luxury goods instead of machinery, food and clothing. When the foreign exchange was exhausted, all the regime could think of doing was to rush to the opposite extreme and ban imports altogether. The twenty-five or thirty top men who controlled most of Greece's banking and industry, and the profiteers and speculators on the narrow secondary level of inflation, continued to evade taxation while everything the peasants

produced or the small city-worker bought paid a heavy tariff. Nothing was invested in the revival of national industry. When the well ran dry, the royalist politicians simply counted on the West to pour in more.

The Populists excused themselves by contending that no economic recovery was possible until law and order had been restored and Communism smashed. But after twelve months of "dynamism," as the royalists fatuously called their technique of government by pure muscle, the Left was stronger than ever, and disorder had grown into civil war.

This disaster was achieved by the simple process of condemning as a Communist everybody who was not a royalist. In the diligent pursuit of such miscreants the regime put half of Greece under military law, abridged the rights of free assembly, ended the inviolability of the home, introduced a system of arbitrary court martial for political "offenders," empowered itself to jail "suspects" indefinitely without trial, took whole families as hostage for one wanted relative, deported thousands to penal islands, and went hunting "rebel" concentrations with tanks and airplanes.

The same royalist technique of recruiting for the enemy worked overtime in Greek Macedonia. This territory was better than 90 per cent Greek. Of the 80,000 Slavs who had elected to remain there after World War I population exchanges, only a handful wanted an autonomous Macedonia—or union with Yugoslavia. But down in Athens, the hyper-nationalists now dictating policy evolved a simple equation: All Slavs are Communists. The police and army regiments they sent north operated faithfully according to the prescriptions of this logic. From across the frontiers, Communist Albania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria fished noisily in the troubled waters. As a result, the Athens government found itself confronted not only with a real secession movement but with a first-class spitting-contest against three unfriendly neighbors. These constant border incidents brought an international commission scrambling over the mountains of Macedonia and Thrace and periodically produced United Nations crises at Lake Success in the remote State of New York.

All these circumstances, plus the fact that intelligent ideas for economic reform were the exclusive property of men whom the benighted royalists insisted on harrying and outlawing, worked to persuade even sober Greeks of good will that salvation lay only in the direction of the far left.

This re-education was a slow process. In every lull between skirmishes and battles, republicans came out of the hills in droves seeking amnesty in preference to continuing as allies of the real Communists. But they found little willingness among the Government forces to leave them in peace. And in the hills the Communist nucleus worked patiently and shrewdly to profit from its opponents' mistakes. Given a few more years of royalist blundering, the nucleus would overtake and engulf the mass.

DIPLOMATIC DOLLARS AND THE GREEK INVESTMENT

Such were the outlines of the Greek dilemma in April, 1947. The sentryboxes outside GHQ in Athens stood untenanted by British guards for the first time in the twenty-nine months since liberation from the Nazis. The hungry, embittered people of Greece waited for "Uncle Truman" to take over.

Would the Americans, picking up where the British had been compelled by the drain of war to leave off, avoid the well-intentioned but drastic mistakes of London's policy?

The Americans got off to a good start in economics.

They listened to the sobering testimony of the British experts who were packing their bags in Athens. These technicians were qualified to testify that the larger part of Britain's financial contribution to Greek recovery had been frittered away by venal, inefficient Greek politicians. Agreements with Britain on specific steps the Greeks needed to regain their economic health had been signed and ignored. Good advice from British economic missions had fallen on deaf ears. An impressive amount of British sterling had vanished into private Greek pockets.

This could happen to American advice and to American dollars too—unless the U. S. established stiff controls. Not futile "advisory powers," limited to a flapping of hands in ministerial antechambers. But direct control of funds and their application, from the keeping of ledgers—Athens did not have a single public accountant—to the final word on where the last American dime was to go.

The Americans therefore demanded the right to supervise and approve all projects into which their money flowed. They also insisted that American experts enter key branches of the recovery program, taking top-rank jobs with regular Greek civil-service status.

To all this the Greek government grudgingly assented. It remained to be seen which would win: the brisk, direct, super-efficient business methods of the American technicians, or the lethargic, Byzantine methods of the Greek bureaucrats, a breed of mortal trained to the

philosophy of self-advantage, siesta and the eternal *mañana*. The Americans might prevail, and get something accomplished—but it was going to be a bruising experience.

The royalists had taken power on the strength of the shadiest of elections, held in a time of hysteria. Even among the people who voted for them, many had done so not out of yearning for kings but because they wanted insurance against the violence of the extreme Left. Since then, the royalists' only contribution to public safety had been the making of more leftists.

Yet American policy, based on the myth that the 1946 elections had been honest because they had been so certified, began by going faithfully along with the royalist status quo and endorsing its stupidities. The hobnobbing of the U. S. Mission with members of the Greek government simply gave a fresh lease on life to the reaction—and a body blow to the hitherto high American prestige with the Greek masses. When President Truman asked the American people to take over Britain's burden, he told them that economic recovery in Greece had been blocked by "a militant (Communist) minority exploiting human want and misery." He thereby not only proved himself a poor amateur historian but also suggested a policy directive which, if followed, would waste the American taxpayer's sustenance as the British taxpayer's had been wasted, and end by wasting the democracies' last opportunity in Greece as well.

The gravest of Greece's many wants was a psychological one—a craving for tranquillity. The land needed freedom from fear, freedom from the plagues of Right and Left, freedom to rebuild in peace. The frontiers could never be closed to foreign guerrillas simply by giving more planes and tanks to royalist generals, because such generals would only use them to create more allies for the guerrillas. A royalist amnesty could never break the Communists' command over the non-Communist rank and file in the hills, because the lives of those who trusted in the amnesty would be safe only until the American observers turned their backs. Greece's salvation from the fanatic Left lay only in the dispersal of the fanatic Right, the royalist politicians in office, the monopolist robber barons who propped them up.

Sanity in Greece resided only with the leaders of the Center—and their strength lay in the great mass of ordinary citizens who wanted only a little bread and a little dignity. Late in 1947, cautious American pressure brought on a cabinet half-centrist, half-royalist. But this was only a beginning. It lacked representatives from the moderate Left—

and was loaded with stalwarts from the reactionary Right. Only a genuine coalition government of parties between the two extremes could be trusted. It alone would impartially suppress the violence on both sides, give sanctuary to the hunted and pacify Greece enough to permit a real election, from which a government able to hold the loyalty of the Greek masses might emerge.

If the authority of American dollars could create and sustain such a coalition, then the "dollar diplomacy" against which the Kremlin trumpeted would at last be worthy of its democratic origins. This was the only way to make Greece "safe for democracy." It could not give the Greek people military impregnability against totalitarian attack. But it would give them a reason for resisting—and the will to go on resisting after conquest by superior force. For such resistance, and for fidelity to a distant ally, the Greek people had a talent which the earlier totalitarianism of the Nazis had discovered at great cost.

BATTLE OF THE BOSPHORUS

In Turkey, the disagreeable results of using American dollars to bolster up a reactionary regime would be less obvious and less dangerous than in Greece.

An American investment in Turkish reaction ran no risk of driving a substantial number of people toward the extreme Left, as in Greece. In Turkey there was no Left at all. There were few pro-Russian Turks, and practically no Communist Turks. Turkey had the tranquillity which Greece lacked.

Unfortunately, however, the Turkish brand of tranquillity was more placid than tranquil, more stifled than contented. It was a peace achieved by the habit of submission to authority, the inertia of the mass under the controls of a one-party government in a police state.

In claiming a share of control over the strategic Turkish Straits, Russia had started out with a strong moral case—especially since she seemed to be asking for less control than the U. S. had over Panama or Britain over Gibraltar, Aden and Suez.

The Anglo-American colony in "neutral" wartime Istanbul would scarcely have shed a tear over Soviet penetration. In fact, most of us there used to take a quiet satisfaction in the prospect of the Red Army's arrival.

That was because we knew the Turks were letting Axis ships of war slip through the Straits to harry our Soviet ally in the Black Sea—and because we knew Turkey to be, not the "gallant little democracy" of legend, but an Oriental-style despotism whose ruling clique of

politicians and generals hardly seemed worth rescuing from our Russian friends.

But by 1947 the Soviets had maneuvered themselves entirely out of their position of virtue. They had demonstrated to the world their inability to feel "secure" in any border country without wolfing that country down and converting it into another station on their imperial highway. The Kremlin's demand for the right to establish garrisons in the Dardanelles was now rightly read as a demand for the Dardanelles, period. This would not merely cut Turkey's "throat," as the Turks aptly called the Straits; it would deposit Turkey irrevocably in the Russian orbit. It would end Turkish reaction—but only by replacing it with Soviet totalitarianism. And it would certainly end Turkish independence. The advantages of such a transformation for liberty—Turkish or European—were clearly nil.

But one thing the U. S. was now in an invincible position to do: we could make Turkey a more palatable ally of the democracies, worthier of assistance from American taxpayers.

The immediate effect of the Truman Doctrine in Turkey had been to bolster the oligarchs of Ankara and set back a liberal Opposition born from the inspiration of the Allied victory over Axis fascism. Announcement of the Turkish-Aid Program had been taken by all Turks as a vindication of their strutting regime.

But if we played safe by permanently joining forces with the Turks in power, if we failed to demand any changes for fear of antagonizing the Bosphorus bureaucrats, then we would be committing the same timid mistake we had made during the war. In those days we had paid heavily in cash and lend-lease for Turkish neutrality—when neutrality had been the best policy for Turkey anyway. Now we would be paying heavily to encourage Turkish resistance of Russia—when any other Turkish attitude toward Russia was unthinkable.

The only way to make an investment of American dollars really fruitful in a common cause—defense against Soviet aggression—was to insist that the regime show itself worthy of American help by reform. To mould the depressed Turkish masses into dependable *long-term* allies, they needed to have something worth regaining even after their country was overrun by the Russians, as it surely would be in the event of invasion. The Turkish army was certainly not going to be of any significant help.

My introduction to this well-publicized army was from a train window in a small Anatolian station back in 1942, when I was enter-

ing Turkey for the first time. Five soldiers were desperately trying to push a small wagon down the platform, with no success. I watched them blankly for a while before realizing that the brake was on. I yelled and whistled and made wild motions with my arms. Finally they understood, and pulled the lever. When the wagon began rolling by itself, they turned their awed faces upward and gazed upon me as they might have gazed upon Hannibal or Moltke or some other Titan of the art of war.

Later I made the more intimate acquaintance of this army, with its antiquated jumble of equipment from a dozen different origins and military eras, its primitive soldiery, its Blimpish officer caste, and its utter innocence of mechanization. There was a military flying field near Istanbul, and a perennial joke of the foreign colony was that it was the largest graveyard of Allied planes in the world. As fast as the Turks received Lend-lease planes, their pilots managed to smash them up. The only vehicle of war a Turkish soldier could be safely trusted with was a mule. This had nothing to do with his fighting spirit. All foreign observers agreed that he was savage in battle and could be counted on to stand till the end. Such qualities, however, no longer won modern wars unassisted.

It would not do merely to build roads crisscrossing across Anatolia where no roads existed at all, and construct airfields, and completely re-outfit every branch of the army with up-to-date weapons and machines. The Turkish peasant-soldier would have to be educated in the use of this equipment, a training painfully beyond his range of experience. And the whole officer corps would have to be sent back to school, not only for mechanized instruction but for the rudiments of modern tactics. This meant every officer up through the highest command. A British general who had spent two years in intimate daily contact with top-ranking Turkish generals and marshals told me succinctly: "These Turkish officer laddies haven't had a new idea in a generation. They are strictly chain-of-command, armchair heroes. They are what you American chaps call fatheads."

And after all the astronomical expenses in money, and in the time of a very large contingent of American technicians and G.I.'s, the Turkish Army would still be inadequate in size and strength to present any important obstacle to the engulfing onslaught of a giant Red Army and air force, presumably equipped with atom bombs and all the rest.

American dollars therefore could not hope to make Turkey any more impregnable than Greece, which meant not impregnable at all. All that the American investment could do was make Russia go

slow, make her think well before directly challenging the U. S. by an aggression against Turkey.

There was one more thing the dollars could do. The Turkish army would perish fighting, and the Turkish people would resist for a time, and then there would be silence. A people accustomed to subjection would have no particular reason to continue wrangling with a new tyrant, not after it had grown used to his foreign face and ways. Not unless such a people had already seen a glimpse of liberty, something it could remember, and regret having lost, and strive to regain.

This was the real opportunity the Americans had in Turkey. It would not be easy to achieve. The attempt would run into the convenient sensitivity of the Turkish regime, its jealous defense of sovereignty, its proper aversion to a return of the outlawed system of foreign "capitulations" which once made the Ottoman Empire impotent.

The attempt would also be slowed down by the inexperience of the Turkish masses in freedom. There might not be enough time to do much more than begin their re-education. But it was the only way to make the dollars pay dividends in real security—by mobilizing the spiritual resources of the Turkish nation. It was the only way, moreover, to make the rest of the still unpersuaded world believe that the strength of America was dedicated, not to the advancement of a sterile anti-Communism, but to the promulgation of a virile democratic faith.

The general staffs and the foreign offices were dead wrong if they thought to fight Communism best by stacking arms in every non-Communist corner of the globe and bolstering every reactionary regime, no matter how decrepit.

This was the dangerous delusion of obsessive anti-Russianism: that only right-wing governments could be trusted if a war with Russia came, and that the moderate Center and democratic Left must be discarded as insufficiently "tough."

Such a delusion played the game according to the enemy's rules. It belied the principles we were professing to defend. It could lose us the loyalty of the hundreds of millions whose choice of spiritual sides would be as decisive—if the final test should come—as the weight of bombs and fighting steel.

These millions demanded something worth preserving, not just something to resist. How long would they stand firm against an unknown evil merely to defend a known evil—the evil of a moribund

monarchy in Greece, a greedy oligarchy in Turkey, or the shoddy fascisms still blemishing the global reaches over which our diplomatic influence extended? If America expected to recruit the world for her kind of democracy, she would have to make that democracy a commodity for export. She would have to give the world proof that democracy meant growth, not decay.

But this was only half the battle.

The overwhelming issue of our times involved the defense of man's liberty, *all* men's liberty—against *all* threats, from whatever direction. Reaction had lost its simple definition; it was no longer an evil which concentrated exclusively at the right pole of the political compass; it had ceased to be a phenomenon peculiar to rapacious capitalism and racist fascism. Totalitarianism now hammered at the gates of freedom from all sides. And the greater peril now lay on the Left—because on that side marched the giant and terrible Soviet Union and its Communist acolytes. On that side, also, the gates were feebler because the threat was newer, less understood—and too often not even perceived. This was the major, potentially catastrophic error of those men of good will who faltered in their resistance to leftist totalitarianism, or even denied the reality of its menace to human dignity.

Such progressives were engrossed with a delusion as great as the delusion of the conservatives that Russia was the one and only enemy. The fallacy of the progressives sprang from the faults they legitimately found with the official behavior of the democracies. Because the democracies were being less than forthright in their defense of freedom, such critics contended, the democracies were no better than the Russians. From this, it was an easy step to believing that the Russians were probably not so bad as painted, after all. In fact, the Russians might be much better. Therefore we should leave off condemning the Russians—and use all the powder of liberalism to blast our own side.

NOTES FOR AN ATTITUDE

When friends asked me on my return from Russia's Europe how conditions were over there, and I would reply that conditions were monstrous, some of them would say: "Oh well—just like Greece."

This was like being serenely impartial to the relative discomforts of a sprained ankle and a broken leg—or an amputation. Benighted as the reactionary governments of Greece and Turkey were, they were hugely outdone in every evil particular by the techniques of oppression practiced beyond the Russian-puppet frontiers.

Indeed the difference was so great that, on my second visit to

Athens after a tour of Russia's Europe, Greece seemed gloriously, rapturously free. This was only by contrast, of course. A few days were sufficient to recall the special Greek brands of tyranny. But glaring differences nevertheless remained.

In Greece, for example, the British had been paying out all the time, while across the borders the Russians were collecting all the time. (I can hear the pro-Russians saying: Ah, the Russians were in enemy countries, but Greece was an ally. To which one could reply with a reference to Yugoslavia and a reminder that the Russians themselves now called their ex-enemies friends.) Increasingly bitter warfare—and proclamation of a guerrilla government for "Free Greece"—would eventually drive the Greek Communists underground, but when I was in Athens they were still operating openly, with legally recognized party headquarters and completely free press. As for the non-Communist but anti-government republican newspapers in Greece, they continued to thunder daily without the slightest hindrance of censorship. Across the nearest frontier, in Bulgaria, a comparable royalist press would have been unthinkable; across any Communist frontier, freedom of open and frank rightwing activity against the entrenched regimes had long since vanished without trace. In Greece, foreign correspondents (including Yugoslavs and Russians) could enter at will and go where they liked. So could United Nations commissions and other international investigators.

In Turkey, all these differences were less marked but still significant. Both in Turkey and Greece, there were police terrorists, sudden disappearances, prejudiced courts. But even in Turkey, where tyranny had centuries of Oriental preparation, the application of force was sporadic and irregular, while in Russia's Europe force was constant and all-embracing. Terror under the reactionary regimes, in a word, was amateur, scattered. Under the Communists, terror was professionally expert—a polished and prime instrument of government.

And finally—perhaps most important of all—it was still possible to be nonpolitical in Greece and Turkey. A man could still go his own obscure way, live his life, without fear of denunciation by his neighbors and his children. In that other world where "people's democracies" prevailed, he had to parade, and cheer, and hang out banners. He had to be with them or against them—there was no middle way, and no peace.

It was, therefore, a crude and almost obscene simplification to lump the evils of both systems in the same sack, and pronounce equal condemnation on the democracies and the Russians for supporting such systems.

I am troubled by the feeling that I have not made quite clear what the difference really was. If so, the fault lies, perhaps, with the limitations of language. One had to see the type of society created by the Russians and the Communists in Europe, and live in it for a time, to comprehend it. At a certain point, words cease to be able to communicate what the mind has comprehended and one is reduced to purple adjectives or silence. Russia's Europe was such a point.

To call Greece and Turkey "puppets" of Western power politics was no great distortion of the current facts. But then to put their abuses of liberty on the same level with the abuses by the Communist regimes was to do serious disservice to the larger cause of anti-totalitarian resistance. Such an equation confused and discouraged many who might have taken a resolute position against Soviet policy. And some it blinded altogether to the evils of Soviet performance.

Men with honorable histories as fighters against injustices foreign and domestic developed a curiously split personality on issues dividing the Russians from the democracies. They exhibited the liveliest sensitivity to the frailties and hypocrisies of Allied behavior; yet this sensitivity somehow dulled, or failed to function at all, in matters involving Soviet behavior. They were expert in detecting the errors of such institutions as Departments of State, and in taking eloquent stand against them. But their own error they tended to miss.

It was a grave oversight. It divided their forces and diminished their utility. If persisted in, it could even hasten the ultimate degradation of those human values which all their liberalism was earnestly intended to preserve.

The natural impulse of the genuine liberal was to expose the evils around him, the ones near at hand. He was acutely aware of the false pretensions of capitalism, which too often professed high democratic urges only to conceal a practical pursuit of markets and profitable investment. His reflexes against fascism were automatic. On the other hand, he was habitually reticent about criticizing "socialist" efforts. In particular, he had been conditioned over a long period of years to see much justice in Soviet grievances against the West.

It would be foolish to deny that these grievances were legitimate. This is too late a date to rush to the defense of the Baldwins, the Chamberlains, the Daladiers, the Becks, or burn a memorial faggot in honor of Munich. The USSR certainly had ample grounds for vigilant suspicion of Western intentions.

But it is also legitimate to inquire how long the nursing of Russian

suspensions was justified. How long would the West have to atone? How much would the democracies have to yield before Russian fears were lulled? At what point did suspicions cease to be reason for the Soviet's aggressive defense and become alibi for plain Soviet aggression?

From the moment Hitler propelled Stalin and Churchill into each other's arms by invading Russia, Anglo-American policy doubled over backwards to assuage Russian fears of capitalist betrayal. Washington and London were almost obsessed with a feeling of compulsion to convince Moscow of their good will. The whole record of our wartime relations with the Soviet proved this.

We sent more than eleven billion dollars in lend-lease to Russia; of all the United Nations, she received the largest share of non-military supplies; of all the United Nations, she alone was not required to let observers check her use of lend-lease on the spot. Laboring under constant fear of a separate Russian peace with Germany or of postwar reluctance by Russia to accept our offer of worldwide co-operation, our diplomacy made one crippling concession after another to the Kremlin "complex." It is sufficient only to recall the effect of these concessions on the fate of the peoples of Russia's Europe.

The skeptical liberal would say: Ah, but what about Anglo-American imperialism? How could one blame Russia for expanding her frontiers in view of British policy in Greece or Palestine, or American policy in Iceland and the Pacific?

The USSR was the only great Power which increased its territory—and on a massive scale—because of the United Nations' victory over the Axis. The other great Powers actually gave territory away. The U. S. gave away the Philippines, and Britain gave away India. Meanwhile Russia after 1939 picked up quite a chunk of empire in Finland, the Baltic States, Poland, Bukovina and Bessarabia. So much for territorial grabs.

But imperialism was not only measured by annexed territories but by controlled territories—and controlled peoples. Both sides practiced this kind of imperialism. The point at issue was to determine which side in the current argument started it, and which side may have acted in self-defense. This was not quite the old dilemma of which-came-first-the-chicken-or-the-egg. The chronology was clearer than that. It narrowed down to Italy and Greece on the Allied side and Middle Europe on the Russian.

Well, when the British were still dropping gold coins and tommy-guns to the ELAS resistance forces, and long before Allied intrigues

with Badoglio or against the Greek Left became visible, the Russians had tipped their hand in Middle Europe through their Polish policy.

A Polish army whose commanders were loyal to the London Government-in-Exile had to leave Russia for Persia on Stalin's demand—because the Russians could spare no food or equipment for them. No sooner was this army gone, however, than the Russians *in 1942* began to organize a “Polish” army of their own—composed largely of Ukrainians and led exclusively by Communist *Russian* generals—for which the Kremlin somehow found ample provisions.

Concurrently, there sprang up in Moscow a so-called “Union of Polish Patriots,” with funds and printing presses supplied by the Russians. Its violent propaganda campaign against the London émigré government was openly supported by the Soviet press and radio despite the USSR's diplomatic recognition of that government and Stalin's personal assurances of esteem for its leaders. From the Union of Polish Patriots eventually emerged the “Lublin Government,” a constellation of Communists and pseudo-Socialists, the prototype for the puppet “coalition” cabinets of Russia's Europe.

The Union and the Soviet-sponsored Polish Army long pre-dated the liberation of any United Nation or Nazi satellite by either the democracies or the Russians. Both Union and Army were already well on the way to their objectives when the Allies were still feebly improvising a Greek and Italian policy.

Pre-liberation Kremlin policy toward Poland clearly demonstrated that the Russians were not *retaliating* against any comparable mischief the Allies had done but were pursuing a deliberate program to convert Middle Europe into a cluster of anti-Allied, Soviet satellites.

It is worthwhile recalling this, even with superficial brevity, because well-intentioned liberals insisted thereafter on persuading themselves that each new aggression in Russia's Europe was a defense against some previous villainy committed by the democracies. Conversely, liberals would roundly deplore anything the Allies did as a dangerous precedent which might provoke the Soviets into justified counteraction—an argument neatly putting the cart before the horse.

For example, the American decision to give Greece and Turkey military-economic aid was labeled just such a “dangerous precedent.” People who said this quietly passed over the fact that Russia already had made hard and outright military alliances with Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Poland.

Similarly, certain liberals blamed the Truman Doctrine for allegedly

provoking the subsequent Russian coup against Prime Minister Nagy in Hungary. They made this assertion despite a mass of evidence that the Soviet move was the anticipated development of a campaign against Hungarian self-government which long predated the Truman declaration. A small but intimate sign that Premier Nagy's fall had nothing to do with supposed American provocation is the fact that the first draft of the Hungarian chapter in the present book was finished two weeks before the coup. After the coup, all that was needed to deal with it was the insertion of a few additional paragraphs into the chapter—without changing a word of the original draft.

The liberal mind which constantly sought such extenuation of Soviet policy was fortified by another article of faith: that Russia would become truly co-operative if the Allies would only give her sufficient reason to be co-operative. Such progressives looked back with nostalgia to the Roosevelt technique of concession.

They ignored or denied the fact that the wartime President's conciliatory attitude had worn very thin by the time of Yalta and that only death, as Roosevelt's still unpublished correspondence with Churchill and Stalin shows, stopped him from acting vigorously on his growing resentment of Soviet bad faith.* Only Roosevelt knew how truly far-reaching his concessions to Stalin had been. The President's untimely death, far from being a blow to the "Appease Russia" advocates, was to their fortuitous but most real advantage.

Yalta, and the Teheran and Moscow agreements before Yalta, and even the Potsdam pact which followed, were preconditioned by the expectation that when the war was over the Powers would continue together in loyal amity, with open give-and-take and no fear of attack. But the prior and subsequent record showed that it was Russia who shattered this amity by operating exclusively on her own, to get as much as she could at Allied expense, until her acquisitions became a direct threat.

It was Russia who transformed the cordiality into antagonism and fear. The issue of American and British security would never have arisen if Russia had not shown her intention to destroy the bases of that security. By her expansionist policy in the Mediterranean, the Middle East and Middle Europe, Russia made the question of her own fears no longer pertinent as an honest reason for her militancy. What counted now was that she was threatening us, and that *we* had reason to fear Russia.

* Joseph Alsop, *Matter of Fact*, New York *Herald Tribune*, April 16, 1947.

War was as frightful a thing for liberal critics of Russia as for her liberal apologists. Nobody was going to be spared the horrors of atomic, bacterial and radiological warfare because of his views pro or con on the crucial issue of what to do about the Soviet Union. Would those who now deplored a strong policy toward Stalin have been deterred from advocating a strong policy toward Hitler if such terrible instruments of war had then been a military reality? Would they have advocated appeasement of Hitler to avoid the risk of atomic destruction? I think not. I think they would have continued, and rightly, to speak out and fight against the spread of Nazi degradation. Then why did they now shudder over the perils of affronting the advance of Soviet degradation? Why had appeasement, once an ugly word, become so lovely?

Such liberals had not asserted that Nazi totalitarianism could be stopped only if we reformed ourselves and made democracy work in Memphis, Kansas City and Madrid. Why did they now suddenly discover that the only way to stop Soviet totalitarianism was by purging our own house of the last cobweb of reaction? Except for the absence of a race-hate philosophy, was there any essential difference between the ultimate result upon humanity of the works of Stalin and the works of Hitler? Did Stalin have less slave laborers, had he deported fewer millions of people from their homes, had he destroyed less liberties, than Hitler? Was there, in the last analysis, any divergence of tactics between those employed by Communist totalitarianism and those employed by Nazi totalitarianism?

And, if war with Hitler had come because Western reaction had tried to appease him until he had grown too strong, why was it now necessary to repeat the same mistake? Common sense cried aloud that the one desperate hope of avoiding the war which the world dreaded was to stand firm against Russian expansionism and Communist aggrandizement, and prevent the hour when Soviet strength would have swelled sufficiently to risk the ultimate trial.

Certainly it was necessary to combat domestic reactionaries and condemn the errors of our own side. But genuine liberalism did not work in the mornings, when rightist sins were up for flagellation, and take the afternoons off, when it was the Communists' turn. There was no double standard for slavery. The liberal's function was to fight tyranny everywhere. It might occasionally place him shoulder to shoulder with his old enemies of the Right—but this bitter price was a small one to pay for the preservation of his integrity. He could not concentrate his fire on reaction at home and let the Soviet reaction

go, for some day the alien totalitarianism could rise and strike down all his gains for freedom. He had an equal and unavoidable stake in all human liberties—even in the areas of Soviet dominion and even where such liberties had never properly existed. Only by speaking out clearly against the totalitarian Left could he restore the progressive Left to its validity, and act as a whole man.

It was a tragic fact that the world had fought the bloodiest of its wars only to emerge into the sombre twilight of another totalitarian challenge. One tyranny had gone down in a burst of destruction, and now another tyranny had reared itself up to take the fallen despotism's place. It would do no good for men of good will to blink this grim reality and their duty away. They could at least give thanks that the choice was not yet between the atom bomb and servitude. Nor did they yet have to choose between the slavery of the Right and the slavery of the Left. There still was time to rally against both—to fight all appeasement of totalitarianism and all appeasement of reaction, whatever its slogans and masquerade.

